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ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF  
POLITICAL ECONOMY.

No. XIII.

THE  
CHARMED SEA.

A Tale.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

LONDON:

JOHN BAX, 67, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1833.

Martineau  
c. 6. 11. 12.



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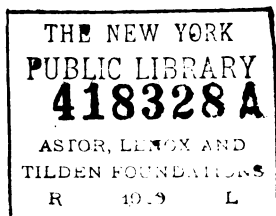
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# THE CHARMED SEA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SONG IN A STRANGE LAND.

"THESE, then, are the mountains," said a Russian officer to one of a band of armed Siberian peasants, appointed to guard a company of exiles who were on their way, some to the mines of Nertchinsk, and others to be attached to the soil as serfs, wheresoever the governor of Irkutsk should please. "These, then, are the mountains, and here they cross the frontier, to give work to the Emperor's enemies, in digging out their gold and silver."

"Yes, those are the mountains, and within them lies the Charmed Sea," replied the peasant, who, however, did not trouble himself so much as even to look up towards the peaks, now beginning to wax dim in the long northern twilight. This man lived in the next hamlet, and traversed this road almost every day, as did his companions; for, though the Russian officer had accompanied the exiles all the way from Poland, the peasant guard was changed from village to village.

"Call the prisoners forward, and make way!"

ordered the officer : and the peasants, who had not felt it necessary to trouble themselves much about their charge in a region where escape was next to impossible, now began to look how far off the prisoners might be, and ran to urge the men on foot to greater speed, and to lash the tired horse of the kibitka in which the women were seated.

At the first glance the men looked all alike, their heads being shaved, and their dress uniform in its sordidness. It required a little observation to discover that some were old and others young ; which of them bore the wrinkles of care, and which of years also. A still closer observation was necessary to distinguish the respective rank and quality of those who externally so nearly resembled each other. No Siberian serfs looked so toil-worn and poverty-stricken ; but neither did any husbandmen in all the Emperor's dominions display such countenances as those of some of the company appeared, when they could be viewed without reference to the disfigurement of the rest of their persons.

The women in the kibitka appeared alarmed at the signal to make speed ; of the men, some ran on, under an impulse of curiosity, as fast as the weight they carried would permit ; the rest preserved the slow and steady pace at which they had been walking since they came in sight. Every other man shouldered an iron bar, with a short chain at each end, and all were, at present, *marching* in silence.

" *Make haste !*" cried the Russian, shaking

his lance impatiently. "You march as if you had still a thousand miles to go; but there, among those mountains, is Nertchinsk, and we are close by the lake, where we are to halt for the governor's orders about some of you."

"You will not cross the testy sea to-night," observed one of the peasants. "The spirits let no boat get back safe after dark."

"That depends on who crosses it," observed another of the escort. "If some call it the testy sea, others call it the charmed sea. Sometimes it foams and gathers its waters into a heap when not a breath is stirring; but, just as often, it is as smooth as glass while the pines are stooping and shivering on all the hills around. Learn who it is that the spirits favour, and who it is that they hate, and then you will know whether a boat will go straight across, like an eagle flying home, or whether it will turn over and over in the water, like an eider duck shot under the wing."

"Hold your tongues, slaves," cried the officer. "Here, you other slaves; let me hear you thank the Emperor for sending you here, where grass grows under your feet, instead of ordering you into Kamtchatka."

In answer, the exiles uplifted one of the patriotic chaunts, of which the loyal ears of their guard had long been weary:—

"Our Poland mourns,—

She shall not die!

Her watch-fire burns,

And help is nigh.

*Her ruffled eagle speeds from shore to shore,  
Till nations rise to bid her weep no more!*



"Wretches!" cried the Russian, "how dare you abuse the Emperor's clemency? Will your treason never be silent?"

"Never," replied a young Pole, "to judge by the look of the place we are coming to. There must be echoes enough among these rocks to tell the tale from eve to morning, and from morning to eve again. In the steppe we have passed, our voices were stifled in space; but among these mountains the plaint of Poland shall never die."

"I will silence it," growled the officer.

"Not by threats," replied Ernest. "The Emperor has wrought his will upon us; we have no more to fear from singing our country's songs, and we will sing them."

"You carry your bar on your shoulder," said the Russian. "You shall all be chained to it by the wrists as before, unless you cease to blaspheme the Emperor."

Ernest, the young Pole, cast a glance behind him, and seeing the exhaustion of his friend Taddeus, who had been lately crippled, and the fatigue of Owzin, the father of Taddeus, and of old Alexander, the feeblest of the party, he had compassion on them, and refrained from answering the tyrant who had it as much in his will as his power to fetter them, though no chance of escape afforded him a pretence for doing so. In order to remind them of their present position in relation to himself, the officer addressed them by *the new titles* which he had never yet been able to get them to recognize.

"Three! you will sink in the marsh presently, if you do not keep the line. Halt, there, Seven! If you get on so fast I will shoot you. Two! no shifting your bar yet. You have not had your fair share of it."

His words were wasted. Owzin still straggled from the line. Ernest strode on as fast as ever, and Taddeus persisted in resigning his load to his stronger companion, Paul, who walked by his side. A volley of oaths from the Russian, or rather one indecent oath repeated a dozen times, seemed likely to be succeeded by blows from the attendant peasants, when a woman's voice was heard above the creaking of the kибитка.

"Husband, do try to remember your number, that I and your children may not see you murdered before our faces. Taddeus, my son, if you can bear your load no farther, say so. Is it manly to bring new sufferings on us all by irritating those whom we cannot resist? Ask for relief, since you want it."

Taddeus could not bring himself to do this; but he cast a submissive look towards his mother, and took his burden again from Paul, who was not sorry, being eager to run forwards to see as much as Ernest of the pass they were approaching.

Lenore silently descended from the kибитка, charged herself with the load of her crippled son, who was too weak and weary to resist, and sent him to occupy her place beside his sister. The

Russian looked on surprised, but did not interfere with the arrangement.

Of all this miserable group, none, probably,—not even their parents,—were so wretched as the brother and sister, who now sat side by side for the first time since they had left Poland. During the whole of the journey they had avoided each other, though, till of late, no two members of one family had mutually loved more tenderly. But, henceforth, Sophia had a quarrel with her brother, which could, she believed, never be reconciled; and the spirit of Taddeus was grieved as much by his sister's injustice as by his own remorse. Sophia had long been betrothed to Cyprian, a friend of both her brothers; and there had been hope that the marriage might shortly take place in peace, as Cyprian had borne little share in the troubles of the times, and had the character, in his provincial residence, of being a quiet citizen. But this scheme of happiness was unconsciously broken up by Taddeus.

In accordance with the Russian Emperor's new rule, that every family, where there were two sons, should spare one to his majesty's armies, Taddeus, described as an active young rebel, had been drafted into one of the condemned regiments which was to guard the frontiers of Siberia. His brother, Frederick, was a theological student in the university at Wilna, fit for something so much better than being a private soldier, under the severest discipline, in a desert country, that Taddeus generously ac-

quiesced in the lot having fallen on himself, and prepared to go into ignominious exile,—with whatever heart-burnings,—with an appearance of submission. But when, not long after, tidings came that Frederick had passed the frontiers, and was safe in France, the resolution of Tadeus was at once changed. Now that he was sure of not endangering his brother, he felt that it would be easier to him to die than to enter the armies of the ravager of his country; and he did,—what was then no uncommon act,—he crippled himself so as to be unfit for military service. In consideration to his parents, he left it to his enemies to take his life, if they should so choose. He was willing to have it spared as long as that of his father. But it required all his resolution to refrain from laying violent hands on himself when he discovered the result of his manœuvre. The commissioners whom he had cheated, found it necessary to make up, as rapidly as possible, the 20,000 recruits that were to be brought from Poland, and also to allow no instance of evasion to escape punishment; and, in order to accomplish both these objects at once, and as Frederick was beyond their reach, they seized upon Cyprian, as one who was almost a member of the family. Before the fact could be made known at Warsaw, or, consequently, any measure of prevention or remonstrance could be taken, Cyprian was marching far away in the interior of Russia, and confidence was broken down between the brother and sister for ever. It would have been difficult

to say which was the most altered by this event. Sophia, who had always been gay and amiable, and of late made hopeful amidst the woes of her country by the faith which happy love cherishes in the heart, seemed to have suddenly lost the capacity of loving. She hated, or was indifferent. Her indifference was towards her parents, and most who crossed her daily path: her hatred was not only towards the enemies of her country, but towards an individual here and there who could not be conceived to have given her any cause of offence, or to have obtained any great hold on her mind. The passion appeared as capricious as it was vehement. No one could declare that it extended to her brother, for towards him alone her conduct was cautious. Her one object, as far as he was concerned, seemed to be avoidance; and he did not cross her in it, for he felt that he had much reason to be hurt at her conduct, as well as grieved at the consequences of his own. The only point in which they now seemed to agree was in shunning mutual glances and speech. This had been easy from the day when the doom of banishment fell on the whole family, for supposed political offences. During all the days of their weary journey of four thousand miles, they had been able to keep apart; Sophia preferring to walk when she saw that her brother must soon ask a place in the kibitka; and it being the custom of her mother, *herself*, and a little girl who was under their *charge*, a daughter of one of the exiles, to appropriate a corner of the post-house where they

stopped for the night, apart from the rest of the band of travellers.

Now that they were at length side by side, they proceeded in perfect silence. Taddeus folded his arms, and Sophia looked another way. It was some relief that little Clara was present, and that she talked without ceasing. She was allowed to go on unanswered, till she observed that mamma (for so she called Lenore) must be very tired with having carried the iron bar so long.

"What are you talking about, child? Paul is carrying the one Taddeus had."

When Clara explained that Lenore had carried it till that moment, Sophia cast a look of indignant contempt upon her brother, who was equally surprised, supposing that his mother had only taken his burden from him to hand it to some one else.

"Have patience, Sophia," he said, as he let himself down from the carriage. "You will none of you have to bear my burdens long."

He looked so desperate, that the apprehension crossed Sophia's mind that he meant to rid himself of his life and his miseries altogether, perhaps by means of the very iron bar which was the subject of dispute. Whatever might have been his intention, however, he was prevented from executing it, for he fell in a swoon as soon as he left hold of the carriage, and was replaced in it, as his marching any farther was out of the question that day. As his mother sat, wiping the moisture from his forehead while he rested his

head against her knees,—as she looked on her children, and saw that their misfortunes were further embittered by the absence of mutual confidence,—it required all the fortitude of the woman to bear up against the anguish of the mother.

It was a relief to all when they at length arrived at their halting-place, on the banks of that extraordinary lake on which no stranger can look without being awed or charmed. As the procession emerged from a rocky pass, upon the very brink of the waters, the peasants carelessly took off their caps, and immediately resumed them, being too much accustomed to the prospect before them to be much affected by it, except when their terrors were excited by storms, or by any other of the phenomena of the charmed sea which they were wont to ascribe to the presence of spirits. Now, this vast lake, extending to the length of 360 miles, and more than 40 miles broad, lay dark in the bosom of the surrounding mountains, except where a gleam of grey light fell here and there from their openings upon its motionless surface. Not a movement was seen through the whole circuit of the vast panorama, and not a sound was heard. If there were bears in the stunted pine woods on the mountain side, or aquatic birds on the opposite margin, or eagles among the piled rocks that jutted into the waves, they were now hidden and still. If there were ever boats plying on the lake, they were now withdrawn into the coves and creeks of the shore. If there were human beings whose superstition was not too strong

to permit them to live beside the very haunt of the invisible powers, their courage upheld them only while the sun was above the horizon. As soon as the shadows of twilight began to settle down, they hastened homewards, and avoided looking abroad till they heard the inferior animals moving, in sign, as it was supposed, of the spirits having retired. Neither man, woman, nor child was to be seen, therefore, at this moment, and it was difficult to imagine any, so perfect a solitude did the place appear. As soon as the peasants perceived this, they began to quake, and gathered round the Russian, with whispered entreaties to be allowed to return homewards instantly. This being angrily refused till a shelter should have been found for the whole party, the poor creatures, divided between their fear of an officer of the Emperor and of invisible spirits, prepared themselves for a somewhat unusual method of march. They took off their caps again, crossed themselves every moment, and walked with their backs to the lake, carefully shunning any appearance of a glance over either shoulder. Their consternation was at its height when their prisoners broke the silence by singing, as before,—

“ Our Poland mourns,—

She shall not die !

Her watch-fire burns,

And help is nigh.

Her ruffled eagle speeds from shore to shore,

Till nations rise to bid her weep no more.”

*Before the last echo had died away, a gurgling,*



rushing sound came from a distance, and those who gazed upon the expanse of waters saw a prodigious swell approaching from the north-east, and rolling majestically towards them; slowly enough to afford the strange spectacle of half the lake in a state of storm, and the other half as smooth as glass. Presently, the whole was surging, tossing, foaming, roaring, while not a breath of air was at first felt by those on the shore. Next followed a flapping of wings overhead, for the eagles were roused; and a prodigious cackling and hurry-scurry in the marshes on either hand, for the wild-fowl were alarmed; and a crashing of boughs among the firs in the background, whether by a rising wind, or by wild beasts, could not be known. Then the clouds were parted, and the stars seemed to scud behind them; the fogs were swept away in puffs; and the opposite shores appeared to advance or recede, according to the comparative clearness of the medium through which they were seen. By this time the peasant guards were muttering their prayers with their hands before their eyes, the officer, astounded, sat motionless in his saddle, and the Poles burst into a shout, as if they had partaken of the superstition of the country. Louder than ever arose

“ Our Poland mourns,—  
She shall not die ! ”

And it was not till the commotion had subsided, *nearly as rapidly as it had arisen*, that either *threats or persuasions* could induce them to sta

step from the station they had taken up on the brink. They all wished that it might be the lot of their whole party to remain near this mighty waste of waters. Those who were destined for the mines of Nertchinsk, that is, Owzin and his family, and Andreas, the father of little Clara, were within easy reach of the Baikal lake: but where the others, Ernest, Paul, and old Alexander, might be located as serfs, no one could guess, till the will of the governor of Irkutsk should be revealed.

Nothing was heard or seen of the invisible powers through the thick darkness which surrounded their halting-place during the whole night. How different was the face of things when that darkness fled away! By sun-rise, the officer having received his directions from Irkutsk, the whole party were on the lake in boats managed by the neighbouring fishermen, who had come forth from hidden dwellings here and there among the rocks. The snowy peaks, on the western side, looked of a glittering whiteness in the morning light, while the fir-clad mountains opposite seemed of a deeper blackness from the contrast. The waters were of all hues of green, in proportion as their depth varied from twenty to more than two hundred fathoms. In the shallower parts it might be seen that their bed was a rocky basin, with no mud, and scarcely any sand to injure the transparency of the waters, even after the most searching storm. Pillars of granite shoot up *from this rocky foundation*, and in sunshine

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show like points of light amidst the emerald waves. The only circumstance which the boatmen could find it difficult to account for was, why fish were permitted to exist in this lake; neither did it live in the memory of man when permission was given to mortals to catch them: but some pretty traditionary stories were current respecting the last question; and as to the former, perhaps it might be an amusement to the lake-spirits to chase a finny prey among the pillars and recesses of their green-roofed sea-halls, as it is to kindred beings to follow the wild-ass among the hills, or the roebuck over the plain.

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## CHAPTER II.

### TO EACH HEART ITS OWN BITTERNESS.

It happened to be the pleasure of the governor of Irkutsk that the two divisions of the band of exiles should settle near each other. This was more than either had expected. A sentence to work in the mines is usually equivalent to one of complete separation from countrymen as well as country; for, as only a limited number of miners can be employed, in comparison with serfs and soldiers, the exiles condemned to the mines run a risk of isolation proportioned to the smallness of their numbers. In the present case, the risk was lessened by the station being *one from which escape was out of the question.* *The miners of Ekaterinburgh may dream of*

getting away, even though they must cross the Uralian chain, and the whole of the interior of Russia, before they can see a friendly face, or set foot in a neutral country ; and therefore they are watched, and not allowed to associate with such as speak a friendly language. But in the depths of eastern Siberia, 2000 miles further into the wilds than even the last-mentioned station, what hope of deliverance can exist ? It is found the least troublesome and expensive way to leave the exiles alone, as long as they do their work and keep quiet ; and there is no objection to letting them communicate, unless it should be found profitable or convenient to send on some of them a thousand miles or so, or into Kamtchatka. The governor had received intelligence from Petersburg that a party would soon be sent through his district to Kamtchatka, and hesitated for a short time whether he should not send on this procession, and keep the next that might arrive within his jurisdiction ; but, as the officer could prove by documents which he carried that Owzin and his son and Andreas were to be miners, it seemed best to trust to another arrival for Kamtchatka, and to locate the present party where work was waiting for them.

A silver mine, near the western extremity of the Daourian range, and within hearing of the waters of the Baikal when its storms were fiercest, was the appointed station of Owzin and his little band of companions ; while plots of ground, within sight of the lake, were marked out for the three who were to become crown peasants.

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The whole procession was permitted to stop for a while at the future abodes of the latter, before proceeding to the almost equally forlorn dwellings of the convict miners. They had little comfort to offer each other : but the new homes might be made somewhat less desolate by being entered in company.

They were miserable places. Log-huts, consisting of one room, were thought good enough dwellings for serfs. The holes between the rough-hewn logs were stuffed with moss, which hung out in shreds, leaving spaces for the biting wind to whistle through. A bench at one end, intended to be covered with a hide, and thus to constitute a bed, and a space built round with bricks, which was to be an oven, were all the preparations for warmth in one of the severest climates in the world. An earthen pan, to cook food in, was the sole utensil provided ; but Ernest was told that he might make himself a wooden platter, bowl and spoon, when he had provided a plough and harrow, the first necessities of all, as the season was getting on. All these were to be made of wood ; the harrow being a mere hurdle, with the twigs bent downward to serve as teeth, and the plough being a wooden hook, pointed with iron, and with two sticks tied on the back as tillers. Where was the necessary wood to be obtained ? asked one and another ; for none was to be seen but fir and pine, and a few dwarf shrubs. The oak, *hazel*, *plane*, *lime*, and *ash* had disappeared long ago, and it was some weeks since they had seen

elms and poplars. The officer only knew that other peasants had these utensils, and so the material must be within reach. It struck him that the best thing Ernest and his companions could do would be to take each a wife from among the women who would soon be sent to them for their choice. These native women could put them in the way of knowing and doing what they wanted; and it must be the best plan for their comfort, since the emperor's own clemency had suggested it.

Ernest ground his teeth in speechless fury at this proposal; but his friend Paul, who was not so apt to take things to heart, begged to know how they were to maintain their wives?

"The best fields we have passed, within some hundred miles," said he, "bear only a little winter-rye, and a few straggling oats. The potatoes are no larger than gooseberries, and not a single fruit,—not even the sour crab we have all heard of, will grow in this region. When we have a plough and harrow, will they give us food?"

"Leave it to the women to find that out," replied the officer. "You see people do live here, and so may you, if you choose to do as others do—marry, and sit down peaceably to praise the Emperor's mercy in sending you here, when he might have taken your lives."

Some one now asked if they were not to be provided with rifles, powder, and ball, as their subsistence must mainly depend on the chase. When they could purchase them, was the

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reply ; these things were always to be had  
Irkutsk.

It was well that the governor had more humanity, and understood better the necessities of the case, than the Russian escort. With the promised assortment of native women, he sent most needful articles for which the exiles had quired ; and Ernest's first pleasurable thought this day was of going alone into the woods with his gun, when the rest of the party should be gone, to relieve his bursting heart where no one might witness his anguish. A disgusting scene, however, had to be gone through first.

On coming in from a survey of his miserable plot of ground, he found Paul amusing himself with making acquaintance with new comers, who had arrived in company with the rifles and fowling-pieces, to be examined and selected almost in the same manner as they. The grey-haired Alexander gazed with a grave countenance of philosophical curiosity. Sophia looked more terrified than it might have been supposed she could now ever feel ; and her mother, who sat retired with her and the wondering Clara, was pale, and evidently appalled at the new society she seemed likely to be placed in. She looked eagerly for her husband and son, who were not in the hut. As soon as they appeared she said, in a low voice,—

“ Husband, this is worse than all.”

“ It would have been so to me, Lenore, if *you had not come with me ; and Sophia, too. The gods will not have anything to do with it*”

people while his mother and sister are with him."

Taddeus turned from the group at the door with no less disgust than Ernest; but it was not to meet his sister's eye. This family had no further wish to stay. They chose their implements and arms, put them into the kибитка, and begged to proceed without delay. Their companion, Andreas, allowed them to guide his movements as they would. He had a ruling passion, which he could not at present gratify; and, till he could, he remained perfectly passive.

When the adieus were spoken, amid many hopes of soon meeting again, and before the creaking kибитка was out of sight, Ernest ran and shut himself into Paul's neighbouring hut, since he could not get undisturbed possession of his own. He closed the rickety door of deal-boards, set his back against it, rested his forehead on the butt-end of the fowling-piece he carried, and struggled in body as he had long struggled in spirit. A driving rack of thoughts swept through his brain, like the storm-clouds that he was destined to see deform many a wintry sky. Providence,—whether there be one or not, or where now hidden?—an instant recall of the doubt; Man,—why doomed to connexion with, to subservience to, man? Life,—what it is, from pole to pole—from nothing to eternity? His own life,—at his mother's knee, in college halls, in the field,—and all for this! His home; with its civilization and its luxuries;—his beloved *Warsaw*, with its streets thronged as in former



days, and not, as now, resounding with the voice of weeping ;—the gallant army filing from its gates, and his own brave regiment, first going forth in the solemnity of its heroism, then sadly falling away when hope was over ;—his own words, little thought of at the time—“ My poor fellows, it is over ! leave me, and save yourselves ;”—all these, and a thousand other images, came in turbulent succession, almost as rapidly as the pictures of a whole life flit before the very eyes of a drowning man ; and from each was breathed, as it passed, the same thought—“ and all for this !” Then came efforts to endure,—to reconcile himself to be the bondsman of an enemy ; and though in a desert, watched from afar with eyes of malicious triumph ! As if actually at this moment beheld in his retreat from the throne of Petersburg, Ernest drew himself up, and commanded his emotion. But again the remembrance of his country, more potent than any considerations for himself, unnerved him, and again his head sank upon his breast, and the conflict was renewed. He was roused from it by a voice at the opening which was meant to serve for a window.

“ Come, Colonel, make the best of it, and take a wife while one is to be had, as I have done.”

“ I am going to make the best of it,” replied Ernest, starting from his position, and examining *the lock* of his piece ; “ but I am not going to *take a wife*.”

“ Well, come among us, at any rate, instead

of staying in this cursed cold place: the women have got us a fire already. But, bless me! you have found the secret of warming yourself," he continued, as Ernest came out, the perspiration yet standing on his forehead. "I beg your pardon, from the bottom of my soul, Colonel, if I have gone too far about taking a wife; if I have touched upon——"

"You have not, indeed, Paul. I was no more likely to take a wife in Warsaw than here."

"Well, I am glad of it; but I shall always need a forbearance I cannot practise. There does not seem much temptation to joke in Siberia; but see if I do not joke my friends away from me, even here, before five years are over."

"Joke away, friend, and we shall all thank you if you can keep it up for five years. But, Paul, this marrying——it is no joke. You will not, surely, give into any of the Emperor's schemes; you will not bring among us——"

"I will not be chilled, and starved, and solitary, while I can get anybody to take care of me, and keep me company," replied Paul; "and let me tell you, a Mongolian wife has accomplishments which are not to be despised by a man in my condition,—as you might see presently, if you would condescend to give a little attention to them."

Ernest looked impatient, and was turning his steps towards the woods, when Paul laid a finger on his arm, saying,

"I do not mean their white teeth and black

## 22 TO EACH HEART ITS OWN BITTERNESS.

hair, though some of them braid it very prettily; nor yet, altogether, that they can handle the plough while one goes out shooting; but you have no conception what use they make of eye and ear, and smell and touch. They can tell in the darkest night when one comes within twenty miles of a hamlet, by the smell of smoke; and, when there is no fog, they will distinguish the tread of a bear, or the neighing of a horse, or detect the tiniest white mouse stealing to its hole, at distances that you would not dream of. Think what a help in sporting!"

"No matter," replied Ernest; "I thought you had too much disgust at being a slave yourself to wish to have one of your own."

"But, Colonel, did you ever know me use anybody ill?"

"Never, except yourself: seriously, I mean: I will not say what you have done in jest."

"The jesting happens very well in the present case; for a merrier and more sociable set than these girls I never saw. But I really mean to be very kind to my wife; and you will soon see how fond she will grow of me, and what I shall make of her."

"And when we go back to Warsaw—what then?"

"My dear fellow! you do not expect that, surely?"

"I do! And at your peril say a single word against it," said Ernest, vehemently, to his astonished companion. "Do you think I will live *here*? *Here*! hedged in with forests! buried in

snow! petrified in ice! while the tyrant watches me struggling in his snares, and laughs! No! I shall go back to Warsaw!"

"But how?—tell me how?"

"How? Step by step, if I live; in one long flight, if I die. Oh! if it should please Providence that I should die in these wastes, I will wring from Him that which I have not hitherto obtained. I will open a volcano in these wilds that shall melt all the snows between yonder lake and our own river. I will make a causeway in one night through all the steppes, and in the morning every Pole shall be marching to Petersburgh to drag the dastard——"

"Come, come," said Paul, "no more of this. I must take care of you for once, Ernest, and bid you be reasonable. You will take me for Nicholas next, and shoot me as you would him, or his likeness—a hyæna."

"Have patience with me," replied Ernest, resuming his calmness, "and leave me my own way of making the best of things, as you say. My way is to dream of going home, in the body or in the spirit."

"Aye; but we shall be afraid to let you go out shooting alone, lest you should see the towers of Warsaw at the bottom of the Baïkal, or be persuaded that a pull of your trigger will take you to them."

"No fear, Paul. I am most religious when alone; and I shall best recover my faith where man is not present to drown the whispers of Providence, or mar the signs He holds out in

the skies and on the mountain tops. Even these heavens are measured out with the golden compasses ; and the same sun which shines on the graves of our heroes fires the pines on yonder mountain steep, and unlocks its torrents in spring."

"How much further will your faith carry you? To forgive Nicholas?"

Ernest drew a long breath between his teeth, but calmly replied—

"Perhaps even so far. Philosophy alone might lead me to this, if it could so enable me to enter into the constitution of a tyrant's mind as to conceive the forces under which it acts."

"But, once allowing that it is acted upon by forces, known or unknown, you cannot withhold forgiveness? Your faith refers all forces to one master impulse, does it not?"

"It does ; and therefore my faith, when perfected, will impel me to forgive,—even Nicholas. But no more of him now. Shall I bring you some water-fowl? Can your fair Mongolian tell you how much longer they will stay with us? Their flight must be very near."

And without waiting for an answer, the badged Siberian serf strode into the pine-woods with a step very like that of a free man.

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## CHAPTER III.

## A WOUNDED SPIRIT.

IF Owzin and his family had been offered a choice whether to be attached to the soil as serfs, or to work in the silver mine by the mouth of which they were located, they would have found it difficult to make their decision. Amidst the manifold woes of both positions, each had some advantages over the other. The regular amount of labour required of the miners,—labour in which there was room for the exercise of intelligence,—was a relief rather than a burden to overwrought minds and sinking hearts; while they might not have had resolution to appoint for themselves, and execute, a daily task on plots of land for whose improvement they were responsible only at the end of the season. On the other hand, they were exposed to the control of Russian task-masters; and it was all a chance whether they would be tyrannical, or whether they would appreciate and reward skill and industry. Again, the dwellings of the miners were somewhat less wretched than those of the cultivators, and were situated, high and dry, among picturesque rocks, instead of standing alone in the midst of a marsh, or on the borders of dreary fir-woods. On the other hand, again, the cultivators could supply themselves with necessaries from their own resources, while the miners suffered much for some *time from the want of all but the commonest*

necessaries, and seemed likely to be always exposed to the inconveniences attending the rudest state of barter. Those who had been long settled had agreed upon plans of mutual accommodation as to providing furniture, clothing, and food ; but it was difficult for new comers to obtain a share of the compact ; both because an increased demand is rather a trouble than an advantage, in a very rude system of barter, and because it must be some time before they could have any thing to change away which their neighbours would be willing to take. Of all the silver which passed through their hands, not one grain was to become their property ; nor, if it had, would it have been of any use to them : for no coin was circulated in this wild region, and metal in its native state is neither fit for ornament nor for a medium of exchange. The neighbouring peasantry cared nothing for silver, further than as something which was valued by great people at a distance, and gave consequence to the region they inhabited, and brought new settlers into it. They knew nothing of the use of money ; and merely exchanged with one another so much rye every year for so much cloth, coarsely woven from wool that came from the south in exchange for skins. In like manner, rough-hewn deal benches went for game or bear's flesh ; and no one article was fixed upon which might maintain a tolerably steady value, and change away for all other things. Such a plan would have simplified the commerce considerably, and have admitted strangers to share it ; but they did not wish to have

commerce simplified, and strangers must shift for themselves as they best might.

The little company of Poles were some time in learning to do this cleverly ; and they endured more hardship than they need have done. If they had been voluntary settlers, seeking their fortunes, they would have found the elements of prosperity even here ; but they were perpetually suffering under a sense of injury ; and there was a spirit of listlessness, if not unwillingness, in them about improving their state, which protracted their inconveniences in a way that one or two of the more buoyant-minded of the party did not scruple to call very foolish. Paul, in the one settlement, and Andreas, in the other, were the first who rallied, and began to stimulate their companions to ingenuity and forethought ; and they had efficient helpers,—the one in his native wife, and the other in his little daughter Clara. Ernest cared for nothing but solitude ; and of Owzin's family, the only one who seemed fit for a state of adversity—of this kind of adversity, at least,—was Lenore. Each morning before it was necessary to be stirring,—hours before the day began to break,—Owzin rose from his bed of disturbed sleep ; disturbed, not by the hardness of the planks, or the ill-odour of the hide on which he slept, or by the suffocating smoke with which it was necessary to fill the hut to keep out the cold ; not by these, for Owzin had been a soldier, and had learned to sleep in any temperature, and on the bare battle-field ; but by cruel thoughts, which *came back* all the more vividly at night, for being



driven off amidst the toils of the day. Lighting his torch of pine-wood, he went forth before the night-fogs were dispersed, or while the stars glittered like steel through the biting air, and was always the first to arrive at the shaft, and to bury himself in the dark chambers of the mine. Taddeus soon followed to the smelting-house, which was the province of his labours. There, amidst heat and toil, the father and son could lose in part the sense of their misfortunes for hours together; for nothing is so beguiling as labour: at least, when that of the head must aid that of the hands, which is the case in most mining operations.

The women were far more unhappily circumstanced. Though they wanted almost every thing, there was little for them to do, from the absence of materials. They looked around them upon a scene of discomfort which they could not remedy, and felt themselves as helpless as ladies of their rank often are in much happier circumstances. When Taddeus had been attended to the smelting-house by his anxious mother, who always went with him to carry his food and ease his painful steps, and when Sophia had meanwhile ventilated the hut and removed the sleeping-skins, little employment remained, but to collect more wood to burn, more moss to stop up crevices, and to see how nearly their stock of food was consumed. Their clothes began to drop to pieces; but they had neither spinning-wheel, distaff, nor wool. The draught under the door seemed to cut off their feet at the ankles, and

the floor was damp, although the oven was always kept heated ; but carpets were a luxury unheard of, and not a yard of matting was to be seen nearer than Irkutsk. There was one little person, however, who did not see why these things need be ; and that was Clara. She had the advantage of childhood in being able to accommodate herself to a new set of circumstances, and she had learned from her father how to make the most of whatever came to hand,—though their object was different enough ; her's being the pleasure of enterprise, and his pure avarice.

The case of Andreas was, in his own opinion, a desperately hard one ; and he secretly advanced as nearly as he dared towards cursing Providence for it. He cared no more than the babe of six months, who ruled over Poland, and what character its government bore ; and during many months, while the struggle was pending, he preserved, and with ease, a strict neutrality. At last, however, an army contract, which he had peculiar means of supplying with profit to himself, was offered by the patriots. This appeal to his ruling passion overcame him. He was one of the first of the inhabitants of Warsaw that the Russians laid hold of ; and he who had never had a patriotic thought in his life, who would have prayed for the Emperor or the Diet as mammon pointed to the one or the other, was punished in the same degree with those who were really guilty of loving their country. It was very hard thus to lose all the gains and scrapings of nearly twenty years, and to be deprived of

the prospect of making any more. It was very hard that his property, of all men's, should be confiscated, when, of all men, he cared most for the property and least for the cause. From his feeling his misfortune so acutely, and being absorbed in it during the journey, his daughter felt it little. For many weeks, he never once reproached her with wasting anything, or being idle, and she was therefore happier than usual during the long journey; for she minded cold and fatigue little in comparison with her father's watchfulness. Nor did her spirits sink when arrived at her future home, for it was less dull than the one at Warsaw. There she was closely mewed up, to be kept out of mischief; and from the day that she had lost her dear mamma, she had never known what companionship was. Here, she had liberty at first to do what she pleased; and when some degree of restraint followed, from her father resuming certain of his old feelings and ways, it was compensated for by an increase of consequence. She began by wandering abroad to watch the field mice to their holes, and pulling rushes to weave baskets in play. Her father, seeing the capabilities of both these amusements, employed her in stripping the nests of these mice of their winter store of onions and other roots, in collecting rushes enough to cover the floor when dried, and even in attempts to weave them into a sort of matting. When Clara thus found her sports turned into *work*, she consoled herself with being proud of *it*, and thought she had good reason to be so

when she saw even the wise and grave Lenore adopting her little plans, and trying to make matting too. Sophia also began to follow her when she went into the woods to pull moss at the foot of the trees, or climbed rocks to see how the wild birds built, that she might know where to look for eggs in spring. Sophia was sometimes moody and sometimes kind, but the little girl had always been used to moodiness in her father, and to kindness no one was more sensible; so that, on the whole, she would rather have Sophia's companionship than not.

As for Sophia, anything like enjoyment was out of the question for one whose mind was so embittered as hers. Unable to be soothed by her mother's tenderness, yet obliged to regard her with high respect, she felt relieved to be out of her presence; and yet the solitude of these wildernesses was oppressive to her restless spirit; so that the society of a child was welcome as a refuge from something more irksome still, and the child's pursuits beguiled her of more minutes and hours than anything else could have done. She too began to look for a mouse's nest, now and then, and to learn to distinguish the traces of game and wild animals. Her mother perceived this with pleasure, and hoped that she discerned in it a means of interesting her unhappy son and daughter in one object, and of bringing them into something like their former state of intercourse. If she could but once secure their remaining together, without witnesses, *for a few hours*, so as to be tempted to free com-

munication, she thought it impossible but that they must understand one another, and mutually forgive.

It was a thing agreed upon that Owzin, Tadeus, and Andreas should go out in turn in pursuit of game, for the common good, before or after the hours of work at the mine. On holidays, which were not very rare occasions, they were at liberty to unite their forces for a hunt on a larger scale; but, in the common way, it was thought better for one only to go, as the fatigue of their daily labour was quite enough for the strength of those who were new to the occupation. Owzin preferred making excursions quite alone; and as he could have no four-footed helper, chose to have none at all. Andreas presently found that the attendance of his little daughter would be very convenient to him, and he therefore speedily trained her to perform the part, not only of gamekeeper, but of spaniel. She not only carried the powder, and bagged the game, but plunged among the reeds to disturb the fowl, and waded in the shallow water to bring out those that had fallen wounded or dead. Few fathers would have thought of exposing a child thus to cold and wet; but Andreas had a great idea of making Clara hardy, as well as of shortening his own work as much as possible, and he therefore wrapt her in skins which could be changed with little trouble when she had been in the water, and obliged her, on emerging, to start a hare, or take some such exercise to warm her. *Though it was by no means desirable that Sophia*

should undergo discipline of this kind, it was that poor Taddeus, lame and fatigued, should have a companion and helper: and when his mother had accompanied him once or twice, it was naturally Sophia's turn. She looked astonished and indignant at being asked, and replied that she had rather he should take Clara.

"Clara had her share yesterday," said Lenore; "and I must see that our little hand-maiden is not wearied out among us all. Besides, Taddeus wants more help than she has strength to give. He should be relieved of his gun, and wants a shoulder to lean upon in difficult places.

"If my father would but have taught me to load and fire," exclaimed Sophia, "I might have gone alone; for there is such a quantity of game that very little sporting skill is required."

"Ask your brother to give you a lesson to-day," replied Lenore, "and then you and Clara may save our harder workers the toil they undergo, partly for our sakes. But I shall hardly like your going alone till, by some means or other, better guns are to be had."

"Papa says that his misses fire three times out of four," observed Clara.

"I do not like the idea of a bear-hunt while this is the case," said Lenore. "It is a fearful thing to miss fire when within reach of the gripe of a bear."

"As Poland has found," said Sophia gloomily. "It is an ugly hug that the monster gives; but some manage to get a knife into its heart while it is at the closest."

"My child," said her mother, mournfully, "why are your thoughts for ever set upon revenge? Why——"

"Revenge!" cried Sophia, clenching her small fingers, and looking upon them with contempt. "No, mother; it is folly for us to think of revenge. If I had been a soldier,—if I had made the false promise to serve the Emperor for twenty-five years,—if I had taken the false oath of allegiance forced upon these loyal new soldiers, I might have thought of revenge: I might have stolen through forests, crept across the steppes, waded, dived,—made my way like Satan into Eden, to dog the Emperor's heels, and get within reach of his heart's-blood. But a woman in eastern Siberia cannot do all this, and must not think of revenge. But hatred is left, mother;—women and slaves can hate!"

"I cannot," replied Lenore.

"I am sorry for you, mother. There is a pleasure in it; and, God knows, we have few pleasures left."

"What pleasure, Sophia?"

"The pleasure of changing everything about one to one's own mood; of staining these snows, and blasting these pine woods, and dimming the sun and stars."

"The pleasure of a child that beats the floor, of an idiot that grinds his teeth: the pleasure of spite. My poor child! is this your best pleasure?"

"Mother, all is changed in the same way, and at once, so that there is no struggle, like the

child's or the idiot's. I never was so calm in my life as I have been since we left Warsaw."

"Because you hate all. You say there is no struggle."

"I hate all that has to do with the Emperor. This waste of snow, and these woods are his."

"And the sun and stars?"

"The sun and stars of Siberia, mother; and every thing that moves on his territory."

"Yes, my dear: I see it all. You hate Andreas."

"Who would not? The mean-souled, cringing wretch!"

"And Taddeus?—you hate Taddeus, Sophia."

Sophia was some time before she answered; but, as Lenore continued to look steadily in her face, she at length said, in a low voice,

"Mother, I loathe him. When he is away, I can turn my thoughts from it: but when I am with him,—that limp of his,—his voice,—they make my heart sick."

"Grief made your heart sick, my child; and you cannot separate that grief from the sight of your brother's lameness, or from the voice which told you the tidings. These things are not Taddeus: though, alas! he suffers from your hatred as if they were. But, Sophia, how is this wounded spirit of yours to be healed?"

"O! let nobody think of healing it, mother. I am happier as it is. I am happier than you. You rise with swollen eyes when I have been sleeping. Your countenance falls when you hear me laugh; and you are altered, mother, very much



altered of late. It would be better for you to be as calm as I am."

"And for your father? Would it be better for all if each grew indifferent? The easiest way then would be to live each in a cave alone, like wild beasts."

"Much the easiest," exclaimed Sophia, drawing a long breath, as if impatient of confinement beneath a roof. "I am so tired of the whole domestic apparatus,—the watching and waiting upon one another, and coaxing and comforting, when we all know there can be no comfort; the——"

"I know no such thing. There is comfort, and I feel it. But I will not speak to you of it now, my dear, because I know you cannot enter into it."

"Not now, nor ever, mother."

"Yes, Sophia; hereafter. You cannot suppose that your present feelings are to last through your existence?"

An internal shudder was here visible which gave the lie to what the sufferer had said of the enviableness of her calm state of feeling. Her mother continued,—

"Just tell me what you are to do with such a spirit as yours in the next world?"

"How do we know that there is another world?" cried Sophia, impatiently. "I know you told me so when I was a child, and that you think so still. But I see nothing to make *one* believe it; but the contrary. What is worn out, drops to pieces and is done with. What-

ever is weary goes to sleep and is conscious of nothing, and so it will be with us and the world about us. We shall soon be weary enough, and it is folly to pretend that we shall therefore go somewhere to be more lively and active than ever. The world is wearing out very fast: so everybody hopes, unless it be the Emperor. Let it fall to pieces then, and be done with, and the sooner the better."

"It will outlast your unbelief, my child."

"No, mother; mine is not a fickle,—it is a progressive mind. A year ago, if we had been coming here, I should have expected to see some such sights as Clara apprehends, when she looks fearfully round her. I should have watched for flitting spirits among the rocks, and have sung hymns in the woods, and fancied they were heard and answered, because there are echoes about us. I am wiser now, and shall not go back into the old state. I see things as they are, bleak and bare, and soulless. You will not find me among the worshippers of the Charmed Sea. I leave such worship to the peasants."

"And another kind of worship to us to whom all things are not bleak and bare. But, Sophia, how far is your mind to be progressive, and why, if there is so soon to be an end of it?"

Sophia was not prepared with a very clear answer to this. She denied that, by progression, she meant anything proceeding regularly, according to a plan. All that she meant was that she once believed a great many things that she did not know, and now she only believed what her senses taught her.

"And do you believe what actually passes before your eyes?" inquired her mother.

"Why, one would think," said Sophia, half laughing, "that you knew what passed within one. Do you know, mother, all the things that I see are often so like shadows or dreams, that I am obliged to touch and grasp them before I am sure that I am awake."

"I knew it, my dear. Your life is like the adventure of a sleep-walker: but are not you aware how sure sleep-walkers sometimes are that they know better what they are about than those who are awake? I do not ask you to take my word on any matters of faith. I only ask you to believe the word of one who has never deceived you, that there is calmness to be had without hating, and comfort without superstition."

"If you mean to tell me so from your own experience, mother, I must believe you: but if you are going to tell me that Ernest is calm and Paul comfortable, that is a different thing."

"I can tell you of myself, my child. I am not happy, and it would be mocking Providence to pretend to be so; but I am not without comfort. You speak of swollen eyes; but tears flow from other causes than grief. Night is the time for devotion, and there are some who can seldom look up into the starry heavens without the homage of emotion. You say my countenance falls when you laugh; and I dare say it is true, *for your laugh now gives me more pain than any sound I hear.* But even this is not a hopeless *pain.* I believe that everything proceeds accord-

ing to a plan,—the progression of your mind, as well as of yonder morning star towards its setting,—the working out of your suffering, and of Cyprian's punishment——”

At the mention of the name, Sophia flinched as if pierced through the marrow. The next moment, she gazed fiercely at her mother, who met her eye with a mild look of compassion.

“ I have done wrong, my child, in avoiding all mention of this name so long. Nay ; hear me. We each know that he is perpetually in our thoughts : that every foot-fall is taken for his, every deep tone felt to thrill us like his ; every ——”

“ Stop, mother, stop. Nobody can—nobody dares—he is *mine* ; and if any one——”

“ No one shall speak his name lightly, my love ; but you cannot prevent our remembering him. You would not wish it.”

“ Yes, I would have him forgotten,—utterly.”

“ No, Sophia, that cannot be. It was on my shoulder that you first wept your confession that you loved him ; it was to me that you both came, when your love was not too engrossing for sympathy ; and by me, therefore, shall your love never be forgotten. If it were forgotten, how could I trust for forgiveness for you ? You will ask me why I should either hope or pray for you. It is because I have faith ; and I have faith because I have not, like you, been tried beyond my strength. I have your father left me, and my deprivations are therefore nothing to yours ; nothing to make my heart sick, if yours were less so.”

*Sophia grieved her mother by coldly entreat-*

ing that she might not add to her sorrows in any way. She was so far from being tried beyond her strength, that at present she did not feel herself tried at all. Nobody could have less occasion for effort, for strength. That was all over long ago. She must beg that she might occasion no uneasiness. Nothing could be further from her wish.

"I take you at your word," said Lenore, with a calmness which was the result of strong effort, for she saw that the moment for indulging tenderness was not yet come. "I take you at your word. If you wish to save me uneasiness, go with Taddeus to-day."

"O, certainly. It will be a very creditable day to begin, too: a fine day for sport, if we can but get out before the fogs come on. Those fogs are so choking, and this smoke too! Between the two, one can scarcely breathe anywhere. What is there wanting to be done before I go? Is there nothing that I can do to save you trouble?"

Lenore shook her head, and said no more.

"One thing besides," said Sophia, returning from the door; "I go with Taddeus because you wish it: but if he dares to whisper so much as——"

"He will not."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure. I advised him not, and I have his promise."

"Why was I not assured of this before? It *might* have saved you much pain."

"Who could venture, my dear?"

"You have ventured, you see, and where is the harm?" asked Sophia, with a stiff smile. As she turned away again, she thought within herself,——

"If I could feel in any way as I used to do, I should be full of remorse for treating my mother so coldly. But it cannot hurt her, as I am also different towards every body else. No; it cannot hurt her; and so——it does not signify. Nothing signifies."

Yet at this very moment Sophia felt her flesh creep at the sound of Taddeus's limping tread approaching.

"I am going with you, Taddeus," said she, lightly, "and you are to teach me to load and fire;" and she talked on till out of her mother's hearing, when she became suddenly silent.

She was not the less obsequious to her brother, watching every motion, and offering attentions which were painful to him from being overstrained. Presently they saw their little friend Clara in an odd situation, which afforded some relief to their formality. She was doing battle with a large bird, the Russian turkey, which had been caught in a snare laid by Andreas. Clara had been walking round and round at a safe distance, pondering how best to attack the creature, whose flapping wings and threatening countenance might well seem alarming to a little girl.

"Stand aside, my dear, and I will dispatch him," said Taddeus, and the turkey forthwith *ceased its clamour.*

"I will carry him home; he is too heavy for you," said Sophia, "and you will go with Taddeus. You know so much better——"

"I can't go to-day," replied the child. "I went yesterday, and there is a great deal indeed to do at home." And the little house-keeper gave a very sage account of the domestic duties that lay before her.

Sophia would not listen to some, and promised to discharge others; but, seeing that the child looked distressed, Taddeus declared that she should go where she liked, slung the big bird over her shoulders, and sent her tripping homewards.

In the midst of the next wood they saw somebody moving among the firs at a distance. Sophia changed colour, as she always did on distinguishing a human figure in unfrequented places. Another soon appeared, whose aspect left no doubt as to who the first was. They were Paul and his wife.

"Well met!" cried Sophia, disengaging herself from her brother, and running on to meet them. "You three will take care of one another admirably; and, Paul, your wife will carry Taddeus's gun when he is tired, and you will see him safe on the way home; and the game may lie any where that he chooses to put it till the evening, and I will go for it. And O, Paul, we want some more money sadly, and you must give us some, for our guns are not to be trusted to shoot it. You see we cannot get more money *without* better guns, nor yet better guns *without* more money."

And Sophia took flight without any resistance from her brother, who could not indeed very reasonably require her to be the companion of Paul's wife in a sporting expedition.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A LODGE IN THE WILDERNESS.

It does not follow that Sophia had lost her senses because she talked of shooting money,—of replenishing the funds of the little company by means of rifle and powder. It only follows that their money was not made of gold and silver.

"I think, Paul," said Taddeus, "you change your arms as often as a court-lady varies her dress. The last time we met, you were carrying a lance twice as long as yourself, and to-day you have a bundle of arrows."

"According to our game should be our arms. When we begin to hunger for bear's flesh, I carry a lance, and bring old Alexander with me to teach the creature to squat on its hind legs, convenient for a thrust. I tell him he will be qualified to lead one about the streets of Warsaw by the time we get back. To-day, I come out for skins,—sables if I can get them; and am my wife's pupil for the occasion. She made these arrows,—blunt, you see, so as not to injure the skins, and she is to bring down the first we see. She carries my rifle, however, that we may not *lose the chance of other game by the way!*"

"Are your sable-skins for sale or exchange?"



"O, for sale, to be sure. Our money system must extend very much before we shall want so valuable a medium. The inhabitants of a poor hamlet can get on a long time with copper and silver before they begin to want gold: and mouse, ounce, and hare skins may serve us at present as well as sables could do. But how do your neighbours take to your plan of exchange by a medium? Do they see that it is more convenient than barter?"

"Many do; and this is the reason why we are in want of more skins, as Sophia told you. The man who was vexed with us for not taking a whole sheep, when we really did not want to have more than a quarter of one, and had nothing so valuable as a whole one to give in return, was more angry than ever when we first offered him a hare-skin for a quarter of his mutton, and told him that you would give him a wicker seat and basket for the same hare-skin. And his wife thought us fools for offering to take three or four ounce-skins in exchange for two of Clara's mats. But now they begin to find it convenient for those who have little merchandise to barter away, to make some one article a sort of rough measure of the value of the rest."

"The women like the plan, I will answer for it," said Paul. "Instead of having to carry the carcase of a whole sheep about with them, with a bench and a bundle of clothing, perhaps, in addition, with the chance of having to convey *them all home again*, because nobody may happen *to want just these things at this very time, and in these very quantities*, they have now only to

tie up their package of skins, and go out bargaining, trusting that those who want mutton will come in like manner to them. O, yes ; the burden-bearers must find their account in there being, at last, a medium of exchange."

"But how is it that they had had none before?" said Taddeus. "One would have thought that the burden-bearers, at least, would have been driven to such a device long ago."

"Burden-bearers have more bright ideas than their lords allow them to make use of," observed Paul. "I will ask my good lady whether she ever thought of such a thing, while she roved about in the south at her mother's heels."

And Paul beckoned to his wife, Emilia, (for so he had called her,) and by means of gesticulations and gibberish, of which Taddeus could make nothing, learned from her that the men of the southern tribes valued their possessions at so many horses, or so many sheep, and that they had no other measure.

"As clumsy folks as the patriarchs themselves," pronounced Paul, "though the world is so many ages older. Only conceive what a method for rovers to carry their purses! Instead of a pocket-book, or a money-bag, or even a package of skins, to have to transport herds of horses, and droves of sheep spreading half a mile-square. Why, a rich man must keep a dozen salaried purse-bearers, instead of having his wealth in his pocket, or under lock and key."

"Do not forget the advantage," replied Taddeus,—"*no small one in the deserts of Asia,—of being able to eat one's money when one is*

hungry, which is not the case with gold and silver, nor even with our skins."

"True; but still they might easily have other denominations of money for common use on small occasions."

"Even as we may, if necessary. At present, our money serves either for use or exchange. We can either make mittens of our mouse-skins, and leggings of our hare-skins, or give them in return for fish and rye-bread; and hereafter——"

"Hereafter," interrupted Paul, "the Siberians may grow civilized enough to have money that is fit for nothing but to be money, like the paper-medium of our merchants; but it will hardly be in our time. There is gold and silver money still in every country in Europe, and gold and silver are used for ornaments and dinner-services as well as for coinage. But my good woman has something more to tell us. Do look at her now, and say whether you ever saw a European wife wait so prettily for leave to speak."

Taddeus had no pleasure in witnessing the slavish delight testified by Emilia when her lord seemed disposed to attend to her. He turned away from seeing her loaded with caresses with nearly as much disgust as if they had been stripes; and his thoughts glanced proudly and painfully towards the daughters and sisters of the heroes of Poland. He was in a reverie when Paul called him to look at a little ornament of virgin silver which Emilia carried at the end of each of the thick braids of hair which hung down on either side her head.

"She says," continued Paul, "that the women

carried on exchanges among themselves which their lords had nothing to do with. These bits of silver, with a very few of gold, are liked the best; then come bright pebbles, and lastly, flakes of something which I take to be the semi-transparent mica that we were talking of making windows of."

"Their lords might, for once, have condescended to receive a lesson from them," observed Taddeus. "The ladies used the more convenient media, in my opinion."

"I think we might take the hint," said Paul. "I question whether we shall not soon find ourselves in difficulties, not only as to the quantity but the quality of our money. Our skins get sadly worn by passing from hand to hand; and our neighbours will refuse to take them when the hair is all off, and they look like nothing better than bits of old leather."

"Besides," observed Taddeus, "there are no means of keeping those of the same denomination of equal value. One mouse's skin may be as good as another, at first; but it depends on how much each circulates, and on what care is taken of both, whether they are equally fit to be made mittens of at the close of the season. There will be endless trouble whenever our neighbours begin to look sharp, choose which mouse's skins they will take in exchange, and which not."

"There is another danger," responded Paul, "though a distant one. The seasons here do *not affect all animals alike, and a winter that may*

The arrow whizzed from Paul's inexperienced hand over the back of the beautiful bird, just touching the tuft on its head. It set up a scream, which caused a plashing in all the marshes for a mile round, and roused innumerable woodcocks from their nests among the reeds. Emilia, out of patience that such a hubbub had ensued upon the failure of an arrow made by her, snatched the bow, and shot without more ado, while the wings of the bird were yet spread. The duck sprang convulsively out of the water, plumped in again, and sank; but the lady was already up to the middle in the water. She, too, dived, and presently reappeared with the prey between her teeth, seized upon two more unfortunate birds which happened to be within reach, strangled them, shook the water from their oily plumage, and laid them down at her husband's feet. Then she returned for the arrow which had been first shot, found, and presented it, and retired behind the sportsmen, wringing her hair and garment, and being ready for further orders. Paul could not restrain his admiration at all this. Unlike the Indian who awaits such performances from his squaw in profound gravity, and takes no notice when they are done, he clapped, shouted, looked as if he was going to jump in after her, and rewarded her, wet as she was, with a kiss and a hearty shake of the hand, when the adventure was over.

Taddeus seemed to admire the duck more than *the lady*.

"What a splendid creature!" said he. "What *size!* What proportions!"

"Aye, has she not? And such an eye, too!"

"Brilliant, indeed."

"So you can get over the slant up from the nose. I think nothing of it; but, Alexander—"

"Beak, I should rather say. How jet black that beak is! And the crest that rose and fell in its terror. And the plumage! Clara had not a finer rose colour in all her cabinet."

"O, you are talking of the duck! I thought you meant Emilia; and I am sure there is the most to admire in her of the two. But you have not seen half her accomplishments yet. There was no room for her to swim in that pond. She swims beautifully. You shall see her in some broad reach of the Selinga some day, when she goes to watch the beavers. She might help them to build. On my honour, she can stay in the water for hours together, and keep under to frighten me, till I expect never to see her again. O, you have no idea yet what she can do."

"She can see in the dark like an owl, you say, and track game like a pointer, and fetch it like a spaniel, and hearken like a deer, and run like an ostrich. Now, tell me what she can do like a woman."

"Cook my dinner, and keep my house warm, and wait upon me."

"So this is to be a woman, is it?"

"Yes; and a few other things. To scrape lint and nurse the wounded was proper woman's employment down in Poland yonder. As for the other things you value so much,—the power of *thinking, and reasoning, and all that,—where is*

the Polish woman that would not now be better without it?"

"In the same way, I suppose, as their husbands and brothers would be better without either thoughts or feelings. Polish men would be happier now as savages than as enslaved heroes, and, in like manner, women would be better as mere animals than as rational beings; therefore, patriotism is to be eschewed by the one sex, and rationality by the other. This is your reasoning, is it not?"

"Let us have no reasoning, pray. All I mean is, that I am sorry to see your mother look so wasted, and your sister so haggard; and that I wish they could be as happy as my little woman. There! she has started a sable."

And Paul, who had talked more gravity this day than any day since the loss of the last battle in which he fought, bounded off to his sport. He was not recoverable, for five minutes together, till near nightfall, going hither and thither, faster than Taddeus could follow him, and having not a word to spare while taking aim, or beating about for a new prey. He was very careful of his friend, however, making signs to Emilia that she was to attend upon and aid him to the utmost. At first, Taddeus would rather have been left to himself, and found it difficult to receive the lady's kind offices thankfully; but they really were offices of kindness, and so modestly and gently urged, that his repugnance gave way, and he soon *submitted* to have his infirmity relieved by one *who was certainly a far better help in guiding,*

walking, and preparing for sport, than either his mother or sister could have been.

To his own surprise, he was not the first to think of returning home, though he had presently obtained all the game he wanted. While he was still moving onwards, and Paul was roving, nobody knew where, Emilia began to look about her, and up into the sky, with a countenance of some anxiety, and a gesture implying that she either felt very cold, or expected soon to feel so. It had not been one of the most trying days Taddeus had known. The sun, very low in the sky, had shone with a dim, hazy light, in which, however, there was some warmth. There had been little wind, and that little had not told of frost. The heavens were grey, and there was a very dark line to windward; but this was so usual, as was the moaning among the firs which now began to make itself heard, that Taddeus would have taken no particular notice of it if Emilia had not appeared to do so. Communication by language not having yet been established between him and his supporter, he could not make out the extent of her fears, till she at length slipped from under the arm which leaned on her shoulder, climbed a neighbouring pine like the nimblest of the squirrels that harboured near, and uttered a peculiar call, which could be heard to a vast distance, from its unlikeness to any of the deep and grave sounds of a northern wilderness. She came down, and pointed the way back; refusing, by signs, to wait for Paul, and seeming confident that he would immediately



follow. He did not appear, however, and again she climbed, and again she called, more loudly and hastily, as volumes of black clouds unrolled themselves before the wind, and seemed to sink as well as spread. Taddeus saw that she apprehended snow, but was not fully aware how very soon the atmosphere, in its now approaching state, becomes incapable of transmitting sound to any distance; and that if Paul was to be warned homewards by the cry, it must be immediately. It was not long before he came, considerably out of humour at finding that both his companions were safe and well. He had concluded that some accident had caused such repeated alarms, and was vexed to have been called off from a very tempting chase.

"Call, call, call!" he exclaimed; "they came as thick as an English traveller's calls at an hotel; and all for nothing. I wonder the jade dared to take such a liberty with me. She made my heart turn over; I can tell you that. I thought of nothing less than that a bear had hugged one of you. Before I was frightened, I would not hear her, for you never saw such a beautiful animal as I was at the heels of. A black fox, if you will believe me; but you won't; nor any body else, for black foxes are oftener seen than caught; and so one is winked at for a tale-telling traveller, if one says what I am saying now. But it was a black fox, as sure as that is a white hare over your shoulder; and I *should* have had him in another minute, if that *jade* had not sent a call that went through me

when my shot should have gone through him. His coat would have been a fortune to me. My hut would have been a palace presently, in comparison with Ernest's, to say nothing of the glory of being the first of you to shoot a black fox. And to have been called off just because there is snow in the air! As if snow was as rare here as it is at Timbuctoo!"

And thus the disappointed sportsman went on growling,—not so that his wife could understand him. She only comprehended that, for some unknown cause, her potent lord was displeased with her. This was enough to make her look very penitent. She scarcely glanced at the threatening sky, when Taddeus pointed it out as her excuse, and stood, looking the quintessence of a slave, till motioned to to lead the way.

She led them nearly as straight as the arrow flies;—a mode of proceeding more practicable in that country than in many less wild. The forests were not tangled, like those of a southern region, but composed of multitudes of stems, bare to the height of some feet from the ground. There were few small streams in the plains; and those few were rendered passable by stepping-stones, the precise situation of which Emilia seemed to know by instinct. Though it was now nearly dark, she did not, in one instance, fail to arrive in a straight line with the passage over the stream: nor did she once pause, as if perplexed, when her companions saw nothing but a wilderness of wood around them. There was no hope of star-light guidance this evening.

The clouds hung so low that they seemed to rest on the tops of the stunted firs; and they slowly rolled and tumbled, as if they were about to enwreath and carry up those who were moving beneath them. It was time now, Paul perceived, to cease his grumbling, as something more important was on hand than the chase of a black fox. On issuing from a wood, a blinding, suffocating mass of snow was driven in their faces, and compelled them all to turn their backs if they wished to breathe. Not the more for this would Emilia allow them one moment's pause; and perceiving that the lame Taddeus, who had long had some difficulty in proceeding in the usual manner, was utterly unable to walk backwards, she snatched his handkerchief from his neck, hung it over his face like a veil, seized both his hands, and pulled him on thus blind-folded.

"Surely," said Taddeus, "we had better climb a tree, and wait till the drift is past."

"Aye, and have our feet frozen off, to say nothing of noses and ears," replied Paul. "And supposing we lived till morning, how are we to get home through snow three yards deep, maybe, and not frozen to walking consistence? No, no; our only chance, if we have one, is in getting on as far as the rocks, at any rate. But God knows I can't keep this up long."

Paul had more to say; for the last thing he ever thought of was leaving off talking; but his companion could no longer hear him. The snow, *falling* noiselessly as the light, yet stifled all *sounds*, and the last words of Paul's which were

heard, came like murmurs from under a pillow. When these had ceased for some little time, Taddeus addressed him, and got no answer. Growing uneasy, he put out his hand to feel for him. Paul was certainly not within some yards. Uttering now her first exclamation of fear, Emilia sprang back upon her footsteps, motioning to Taddeus not to stir, and in two minutes returned with her husband, who had tripped and fallen, and been half buried in snow before he could recover himself. In order that this might not happen again, his wife slipped her girdle, and tied it round his arm, holding the other end herself, and dragging on their lame friend as before.

"This will never do," said Taddeus, resolutely stopping short. "You two will be lost by lagging with me. I shall go back to the wood, and fare as I best may till the storm is over; and God speed you!"

Paul answered only by pushing him vigorously on, setting his back against Taddeus's, so that the breadth of only one person was opposed to the drift, and one made a path for all. This was an amendment; but Taddeus was still convinced that the two would get on better without him, and again he stiffened himself against being driven forward.

"I am going back," said he, very distinctly. "If the plain is passable in the morning, you will come and look for me. If not, never mind. You know *I* cannot be sorry to get quit so easily of such a life as mine."

Paul growled impatiently; but, for once, Tad-

deus was too nimble for them. He had played them the slip, and they groped after him for some minutes in vain.

"It does not much matter," muttered Paul to himself. "It is only being found a few feet further from one another eight months hence, when the snow melts. Emilia and I will stay together, however; we will keep one another warm as long as we can. 'Tis not so very cold now, though, to my feeling, as it was; and yet I can scarcely tell whether Emilia grasps me or not. 'Tis the sleepiness that is so odd. One might choose a better time for going to sleep, though there is a big, soft, feather-bed about us. But I don't believe I can keep awake two minutes longer. Holla! there! What's that? Why! is this Poland again? Aye, home: yes, yes. Why, mother, you have seen me faint before, and you did not scream so then. But it is so dark. Bring lights. Have you no lights? Eh, what? I can't hear you. My ears;—how they ring? Lights, I say! Eh? Good-night, mother. I'm sleepy. I....I can't....good-night."

And Paul ceased his muttering, having sunk down in the snow some moments before. Emilia did not cease to scream in his ear, to attempt to raise him, to chafe his limbs, and warm his head in her bosom. He made feeble resistance, as if angry at being disturbed; and in keeping this up lay the only chance. Before he became quite passive, a new hope crossed her. For one moment the drift slackened, ceased; and in that moment came tidings that help was not far off.

There was yet neither gleam nor sound; but Emilia detected that there was wood-smoke in the air. She at once gave over her chafing, and shouting into the ears of the dying man, lifted him on her back, and struggled forward in the direction of the fire. It was not so difficult for her to do this as it would have been to Sophia, for she had been accustomed from childhood to bear heavy burdens of skins, and to bring faggots from the woods. Before she was quite exhausted, she not only was encouraged by a scent of turpentine which reached her, but could distinguish a red gleam through the veil of falling snow.

Her appearance was somewhat startling to those who had kindled the fire. They were Siberian merchants,—that is, itinerants, who knew as well as any people in the world how to keep body and soul together in all weathers. The present company consisted of three who were just finishing their yearly circuit, and, having been detained on the road by the great increase in the number of their customers, in consequence of the Emperor's accession of convict subjects, had found the autumn close upon them while they were yet some way from their several homes. They were now encamped for the night, and seemed to have no other anxiety amidst this terrific wilderness than that the frost should immediately follow the snow, in order that the plains might be passable. They had banked up the snow in a circle round them, and lighted a huge fire within. A bear skin, stuck upon poles, *made a sort of tent covering, and one at a time*

was employed to prevent its becoming too heavily laden by the drift. The others lazily fed the fire, as they lay on hides within the heat of it, and smoked their pipes and drank brandy as calmly as if they had been under the best roof in Tobolsk. The glittering of the white wall in the background, the sparkling of the snow-flakes as they drizzled thick and slanting over the darting blaze, had less of a domestic character than the retreat in which the merchants alternately dozed and gossiped. The place altogether looked very tempting to Emilia as she emerged from the utter darkness, and stood dripping with her load in the presence of the shoveller. The man swore, the dogs leaped up, the dozers roused themselves; and, though vexed at the interruption, they could not refuse a place by their fire to the wanderers.

More than this, however, they would not do. They were impenetrable about poor Taddeus's fate; and as they would not stir, Emilia was exposed to a sad struggle between duty and inclination. Her husband began to revive almost immediately, and she believed that there was yet time to save his friend, if she could bring herself to leave the further cure of Paul to the merchants.

She did her duty. Pointing out to the smokers the method in which they were to proceed, and in which they were indeed much practised, she seized a handful of brands, some of which might she hoped, escape being quenched, called the dogs without ceremony, and stalked forth against the way she had come, the brands casting

scanty red light for a few moments only before she disappeared.

The shoveller nearly forgot his duty in looking out and listening, for he was better aware than his mates below what Emilia had to contend with. He began to give her over, and his companions to swear at the probable chance of losing their dogs,<sup>1</sup> before there was any sign of motion near.

"Keep that man quiet, can't ye?" the watchman cried. "I want to listen."

"He won't be still," they replied. "His pains and twitches are on him. We have warmed him too soon. You should see him floundering like a duck in the water. Listen how he moans."

"Move him farther from the fire, then, and make him hold his tongue. I could not hear the dogs two yards off with such a screeching coming up from between you."

As soon as Paul began to collect his ideas, he kept his pain more to himself, and began to listen as eagerly as any body for sounds from afar.

"I see something; but it cannot be the light she carried,—it is so high up in the air," proclaimed the watchman. "It is coming this way, however. No: it is out. Aye; there it is again. It was a thick wreath that hid it. Now, where is it gone?"

Paul scrambled up on his hands and knees, intending to play the watchman too; but he could not yet stand. His feet were as numb as ever, though his ankles burned with pain. The



light was not out, and it came riding in the air, dimly dancing, and then steadily blazing again. It was preceded by one of the dogs, leaping backwards and forwards between the little camp and the party behind. The other dog did not do the same, being otherwise engaged. He was the torch-bearer.

When Emilia had been led by the dogs to the place where Taddeus lay, and had reared him up insensible from under the drift, she found she could not charge herself with both the body and the light, the one of which was nearly as indispensable as the other. She carried Taddeus as she had carried her husband, and made one of the tractable dogs mount to the top of all with a flaming torch in his mouth; and thus they proceeded, the drift sometimes being nearly as thick as ever, and threatening to plunge them in darkness; and sometimes slackening so as to allow gleams and flickerings to point out her former footsteps.

She could think no more of Taddeus when she saw her husband dizzily falling back as often as he attempted to rise, and groaning with his torments. She was in consternation when she had examined his ancles and feet; and seizing a large knife and an earthen bowl that lay near, she disappeared behind the fire. A fearful howl from each of the dogs gave the next tidings of her. The merchants swore that they would cut the animals' tongues out if this bark brought any more strangers in upon them. They presently saw that their dogs would never howl more. *Emilia* appeared with a bowl full of teeking

blood in one hand, and the carcasses of the two poor animals in the other : and immediately proceeded, as if she saw and heard nothing of the fury of the merchants, to pour the warm blood down the throats of Paul and Taddeus, and to cover up their feet in the bodies which she had slain and ripped up for the purpose. When the enraged owners seized her two braids, and pulled them as if they would have divided her scalp, she quietly lifted the great knife to either side of her head and severed the hair. When they gripped her by the shoulders, as if they would have shaken her to pieces, she ducked and disappeared behind the bearskin. When one of them wrenched the knife from her, and made a thrust in his passion, she leaped through the fire, and took up a position, with a flaming pine-splinter in each hand, which they did not choose to brave. As soon as Paul could make himself heard, he offered the value of many dogs, if they would let his wife alone ; and, as the animals could not be brought to life again, the owners saw that their best wisdom would be to make as good a bargain as they could.

Paul not only offered this high compensation under immediate apprehension for his wife's safety, but thankfully confirmed the bargain when she was sitting securely beside him, or helping him to use his stiff limbs, by leading him to and fro in the little space beside the fire. He felt that he should be paying for the restoration of his own feet, and perhaps of Taddeus's life ; for he much doubted whether either limbs or life

could have been saved by other means than Emilia had so promptly adopted, and the efficacy of which she, in common with other natives, well knew. The suspicion never crossed him that he might not be able to fulfil his engagement, and that these men were now in possession of the very wealth he had promised them.

The whole party not only lived till morning, but were of better cheer when the day dawned than they had been twelve hours before. The two sportsmen were weak and stiff, and not a little dispirited when they looked out upon the dreary waste around, and pondered how they were to reach home; but the danger and the fearful battling with the elements were over.

The sky was still dark, but the air so serene, that if a solitary snow-flake had found its way from the clouds, it would have sauntered and danced through the air like a light leaf in autumn. There were no such flakes, however, and all the snow that the atmosphere of the globe could be charged with seemed to be collected within view. Snow was heaped on the eastern mountains, and tumbled in huge masses among the stark, black rocks at their base;—snow was spread to a vast depth upon the steppe, as far as a horizon which it made the eyes ache to attain, clearly distinguishable as it was from the leaden sky;—snow was spread, like a cushioned canopy, over the black woods which extended northwards for many miles. Amidst this waste of whiteness, black waters lay here and there in pools, or in wide reaches of rivers; and in other parts there was a rushing of the currents, and a

smashing and tumbling of the young ice, which had begun to form, but was already giving way at the touch of light and of more temperate airs. All this was dreary enough; but the smoke of the smelting-house could be seen far off: home was visible, if they could but reach it.

The merchants travelled back with the party, in order to receive the promised compensation for their dogs; and Paul was not a little amused with the accounts they gave of their mode of traffic.

"You must have a troublesome journey of it sometimes, friend," he observed to the man next him, who had, like all his brethren of the craft, picked up enough of the languages of the various people he dealt with to be able to carry on something like a conversation. "You must have a troublesome journey in such weather as this," said Paul to him; "but you are free from the danger of being robbed, as people of your trade are in some countries. It is very hard, when they have disposed of their wares, and begin to enjoy the lightness of their load, and the goodly look of the gold and silver they carry in their bosoms, to be stopped in the dark and robbed, or to wake in the morning and find their pouch as empty as their packs. You are never so robbed, I suppose?"

The Siberian indulged his scorn at the idea of gold and silver, and thought that those who carried their wealth in such small compass deserved to lose it. How much better, he urged, was a pack of skins, or a drove of black cattle, or a

sledge-load of rye-flour, which no man could hide in his bosom and slip away with! Though Paul thought robbery a bad thing, he did not consider the not being subject to it the very first quality in money. He asked why the merchant mentioned three kinds of money; and whether all his customers did not agree to use the same.

"Oh, no! Some give us all things that they make or grow in return for our tea from China, and the pepper we buy from abroad, and the clothing we bring from Tobolsk. Others give us only skins; others only cattle; others, again, only rye."

"That is, they use these articles respectively as money."

"Yes; and what we take as money in one district we sell as merchandise in another."

"So you use no coin at all."

"Not here. We travel along a vast line;" and he stretched his arms east and west with a most important look. "In the west, we do as they do in the west,—we pass the Emperor's coin. In the east, we do as they do in the east,—we make no objection to whatever gain they put in our way."

"But do they make no objection? It seems to me that there must be perpetual objections. One says, 'Give me wool for rye.' 'I have rye enough,' says the shepherd. 'What do you want most?' asks the cultivator. 'Fish.' So the cultivator goes to the fisherman, and says, 'Give me fish for rye.' The fisherman wants no rye, but skins; so, even if the hunter happily wants

rye, the cultivator has to manage three bargains before he can get his wool. This seems to me a system open to many objections."

"Yes; the people are as long in exchanging their fish and their furs as in catching and curing them. But what is that to us? We reckon upon spending twice as much time where there is barter as where there is sale; but we make our gain accordingly."

"Aye, to the injury of your customers: they lose their time in bargaining, and by not dividing their labours; and they also pay you largely for the loss of your time. Truly, they are losers in every way. Why do not you teach them to use money?—then you would finish your traffic, and get home before these storms could overtake you."

The merchant laughed, and said that some ways were better for some kinds of people, and others for others. The thing that took the most time, after all, was the measuring quantities of different articles against one another, and agreeing upon their value. Every man could tell how much trouble and expense his own article had cost him, and nobody could judge in the same way of his neighbour's: a third party was necessary to decide between them.

"Oh, aye; and you merchants are the third party, and so have the pronouncing upon the value both of the goods you buy and the goods you sell. It may be very profitable to you to keep exchange in this rude state; but it would be a *prodigious* convenience and saving to the

people to have the value of their produce measured, and made somewhat steady, by a standard which should not vary very much."

The merchant thought things had better go on as they were. Gold and silver coins were much more valuable among the wise people that lived westwards than among the simple folks to the east.

"As gold and silver, certainly," said Paul; "for savages have little notion of their being valuable. Even my wife there wore as much gold as a duchess would have been glad of, the first time I saw her, and would have given it all away for as many steaks of horse-flesh as she carried ounces of precious metal. But, as money, some such article would be useful to savages in the same way as to civilized people. It would save their time and labour, and prevent their being cheated by you, Mr. Merchant."

The merchant still remained an enemy to innovation; like all who profit largely by things as they are. So Paul pursued,

"I assure you I can speak to the want savages have of money. Even in our little company, inhabiting only five huts in all——"

"You are not going to call us savages," sternly interrupted Taddeus, who had just joined his friend.

"O yes, I am. What would you have more savage than our way of passing last night? or our huts? or our implements? or all about us *on this side Irkutsk?*"

"That has nothing to do with the matter. *You are talking of a social arrangement, and its*

subjects; and when the subjects are civilized, you cannot show by their example how the arrangement suits a savage state. I suppose you allow that we, as Poles, are civilized."

"Savage; absolutely savage," persisted Paul. "Why now, who can look more savage than Ernest when you catch him talking to the spirits of the Charmed Sea, or whoever else it is that sets him raving there? Where was there ever a savage, if it is not Andreas when any one alludes to his iron chest at Warsaw? Or your own sister, for that matter,—ten times a day she looks as savage as——"

"As your wife," said Taddeus, moved beyond his patience.

"Just so; only my wife is more like a faithful dog, and your sister like a hunted tiger-cat. But, as I was saying, Mr. Merchant, even in our little company, we presently found we could not get on without a medium of exchange." And he explained their device of skins of three several values. The merchant seemed more amused than he could well account for, and asked if all were so honest that nobody stole this kind of money.

"It is never stolen entire," replied Paul. "Such a theft would be detected at once in so small a society as ours."

"Even supposing," interrupted Taddeus, "that there was a Pole among us who would steal."

"Take care how much you answer for, friend," said Paul. "I was going to say, that though no entire skin has been abstracted, some expert fingers have been at work clipping. A curious



mouse-skin came into my hands lately, made of cuttings from the jags and edges of other mouse-skins."

"Indeed! I should not have thought an article of so low a denomination worth the labour."

"Some people,—you know who I mean,—think no labour too much for gain. Besides, this was probably a first experiment; and if it had succeeded, there would have been a rising up early, and sitting up late, to make patch-work hare-skins or sables,—if we should ever attain to high a denomination of money."

"Well; but what did you do to the miser; for I conclude you mean him? He is no Pole, remember; he does not like to be considered so, so and we may as well take him at his word."

"Since I could not threaten him with the ancient punishment of counterfeiters of the current money, namely, pouring it molten down the throat, I came as near to it as I could. I fried a bit of the tail, and made him eat it, on pain of being pilloried at the mouth of the mine. Then I let him burn the rest, and told him he should be watched, and not get off so easily the next time he was caught clipping and manufacturing money. I dare say he cursed our medium for not being metal. You may melt metal, and nobody knows how many clippings a lump is made of; but piece a skin as neatly as you may, and daub over the inside as cleverly as Andreas himself, and the seams still remain visible to the *curious* eye. The public has the advantage over counterfeiters where leather money is used."

"And how many advantages knaves have over

the public where leather money is used, we may live to see," observed Taddeus. He was right: it was not necessary for them to be many hours older to ascertain this point.

They were yet at a considerable distance from home when they heard shouts ringing among the rocks before them, and saw one or two dark figures moving among the snow in the plain. The young men answered the shouts, and made signals, the most conspicuous they could devise. The merchants at once became exceedingly inquisitive about the exact situation of Paul's abode; and having learned it, were suddenly in far too great a hurry to go any farther. As for the promised payment, the sportsmen were welcome to the dogs, unless indeed they would give their arrows and a rifle, and the game they carried, in consideration of the loss. Paul sighed over his valuable new arrows, Taddeus over his only rifle, and both over the skins which they were conveying home to be made money of, and which they had managed to retain with that view through the whole adventure. They could not refuse, however, considering what the martyred dogs had done for them; so they surrendered their goods, and returned from this memorable sporting expedition much poorer than they set out; and the merchants retired precipitately in the opposite direction.

At an abrupt turn of the rock they came upon Sophia, who was alone, busily engaged in tracking the path they had followed after parting from her the preceding day, and sounding in the

snow. Sometimes she looked intently into the black stream which flowed sullenly by, and then renewed her sounding, so eagerly, that she did not perceive the approach of the young men and Emilia. Their footsteps could not be heard. She started when they came close up to her, and said, with an indescribable expression of countenance,——

“O, you are safe, are you? We have all been out since dawn to look for you. You will find my mother farther on. They would not spare my father from the mine.——So you are safe, after all!”

“You are disappointed,” said Taddeus, in a low and bitter tone. “You hoped to see me no more. You were praying to find my body in those waters.”

“I do not pray,” said Sophia, pettishly.

“Not to demons?” asked her brother.

“What and where are they?” inquired she, laughing. And she turned to go home without objecting to her brother’s construction of what she had been doing.

“I wish Emilia had let me alone last night,” thought Taddeus. “No; there is my mother. What would become of her with poor Sophia for her only child?”

And as he shuffled forward painfully to meet his mother, he felt that there was yet something to live for, even if Poland should not be redeemed.

## CHAPTER V.

## TRAFFIC IN THE WILDS.

THERE was a very good reason for the merchants turning back when they discovered whither they were being conducted. They had not only made an enormous profit of their traffic in the little settlement during the absence of the young sportsmen, and the employment of the rest of the men in the mine, but had carried off nearly all the skins they could lay their hands on. They had frightened Clara, and cheated Sophia, out of their respective stocks, and fairly robbed Lenore : so that, with the exception of half a dozen skins, too much worn to be saleable, and therefore left behind, the little company was once more moneyless. Some of them looked rather grave upon the discovery of this new inconvenience, and not the less because the weather was now of the dubious kind which sets in at the end of autumn, and renders the pursuit of game impracticable for a few weeks. But nobody looked so dismal as Andreas, who could not hold up his head for some days after this new misfortune. The loss of anything once possessed was to him the most intolerable of evils ; and it certainly seemed to be the one from which he was to have no rest. " I would be deaf, dumb, and blind to be rich," was the sentiment which had been heard to escape from him in his agony. He was not deaf, dumb, or blind ; but neither was he rich.

"I would live directly under the sun in the Sandy Desert, or burrow in the snow at the North Pole, if I could get gold there," was another of his aspirations. He was fixed among the snows, but not, alas ! so as to get gold ; and he considered himself a much-tried man, and appeared with a countenance of great dejection when the next time of meeting their neighbours for the purpose of making purchases came round.

This little market presented a curious scene. It was held near the mouth of the mine, and either on holidays, or at leisure hours ; so that groups of grim-faced miners stood to look on, or took part in the traffic, if they chanced to have anything wherewith to conduct it. It seemed remarkable that there should be an unbounded store of what is commonly considered wealth beneath their feet, and piles of bars of shining silver in the smelting-house at hand, while the traffickers were exchanging their goods laboriously, and with perpetual disputes, for one another, or for some common commodity which bore a different value according as it was wanted for use or to serve as a circulating medium. Andreas, and some others cast longing glances towards the store-houses of the metals procured by their labour ; but there was always an ample array of green coats and red collars,—of sabres and fire-arms,—and, above all, a full exhibition of the knout : in the face of which terrors, no one could dream of fingering his Majesty's mineral wealth, coined or uncoined.

*The next was a somewhat awkward market-day*

for the Polish settlers. Having been disappointed of getting game, they had nothing to sell; and, having been robbed, they had no purchase-money but five or six clipped and worn skins. They were some time in perceiving the advantage this gave them as to the quantity of goods they might obtain in return; but the discovery, when made, helped to raise the spirits even of Andreas himself; as did another circumstance, which acted in some degree as a remedy of their new inconvenience,—the increased rapidity of the circulation of their money.

Sophia could never bring herself to take part in any social business or amusement, and regularly walked off into solitude when there was a congregation of numbers. To-day, she wanted to have Clara with her, and consented, though unwillingly, to wait on a sheltered ledge of rock near, till the little girl should have made a purchase for her father with her little mouse's skin, the only one she had.

The article she wanted was a pair of pattens for her father;—broad sandals of light wood, tied on with leather thongs, to prevent the feet from sinking in the snow before it was frozen into a hard surface. The right time for chasing the elk is when the snow is in this state; for the elk, wearing no pattens, sinks in the snow at every step, while the shod hunter gains upon him in the open plain. Clara thought the possession of a fine elk would comfort her father for his losses sooner than any other consolation she could devise; so into the market she went, to

look for a pair of pattens. There were several to be sold; but, at first, the holders laughed at the little girl for offering so low a price; and only laughed again when she made melancholy signs that she had no more money to offer. When they found, however, that nobody could give more, they began to be afraid of having to carry their wares home again, and grudgingly offered the worst pair in the market. There was a very suspicious crack in one patten, and the thongs of the other were a good deal worn; but Clara thought they would last till one elk was caught, and then her father would be rich enough to buy a better pair. So she untied her precious mouse-skin from about her neck, gave one more look at it, and paid it away. She wondered whether she should ever see it again, and was sure she should know it by the little hole she had burned in one corner to pass a string through.

Seeing that Sophia looked in a reverie, and in no hurry, she thought she would stand a minute or two to see what became of her mouse-skin.

She had not to wait long. The five who held money were by far the most important people in the market, where money was the scarcest commodity of all; and this importance shifted from one to another more quickly as the exchanges became more brisk.

The countryman who sold the pattens had not intended to purchase anything; but others who did, and who wanted money to do it with, came *to him* with so many offers of goods that at last *he was* tempted, and gave the mouse-skin for a

quiverful of blunt arrows and a wooden bowl and platter.

"O dear!" thought Clara, "I have certainly made a very bad bargain; for the bowl and platter, without the arrows, are worth as much as these trumpery pattens."

She could not help following to see who would have her mouse-skin next. The woman who held it seemed to have a great wish for a hunting knife; for she passed by a variety of offered goods, and pushed through a group of eager sellers, to where Ernest stood leaning on his lance, and observing what was going forward. She seized the knife with one hand, as it was stuck in his belt, and proffered the money with the other; but Ernest smiled, and made signs that he had no wish to sell his knife.

"What have you to do with it, my dear?" he inquired, struck with Clara's look of anxiety. "You look as if you wished me to part with my knife."

"This was my mouse-skin," she replied, half crying, "and look,—this is all I got for it!"

"Indeed! I could make a better bargain than that for you now. Let us try; and perhaps I may get both a better pair of pattens and my knife back again soon, if we manage cleverly; and if not, your father will lend me his knife till I can get another from Irkutsk."

And the good-natured Ernest made the exchange for Clara's sake; and, moreover, bought the pattens, which he declared he wanted very much.



Clara had too much sense of justice not to insist on his taking something more ; and Ernest promised to accept the first mat she should make.

"And now," said he, "we will look out for the best pair of pattens in the market ; but you must not be in a hurry to make your bargain this time. What else would you like to have ?"

There were so many tempting things in sight that it was somewhat difficult to choose : and she was half-frightened by the eagerness with which she was courted when she was perceived to be one of the favoured five money-holders. She grasped Ernest's hand, and clutched her treasure, and saw nothing of Sophia's signs of impatience, while engaged in negotiation. By Ernest's help, and to her own utter astonishment, she presently found herself mistress of a perfect pair of pattens of the finest wicker-work, a large package of tea which had just crossed the frontier, pepper enough to last the winter, and a vigorous young rein-deer. The rich little lady thought a scarcity of money a fine thing ; and having thanked Ernest very gratefully, and given her wealth into the charge of her delighted father, she at length joined Sophia on the rock.

"I am glad you had a reason for staying," said Sophia ; "but I do not care now for going any farther. These people must soon have done now, I suppose, and leave us in peace."

"O, I am sorry I kept you," said Clara ; "but yet,—I should like to see who has my mouse-skin after all. I shall know it anywhere by the hole in the corner."

"You need not move from where you are, child. You may see where money is passing from hand to hand, by the gathering of the people about the holder. Look how they run after the man with the Chinese belt who sold you the tea."

"Will he carry it away, I wonder?"

"No. He is going back to China for more tea, I suppose; and your mouse-skin will be of no use to him there, or on the road; so he will part with it in this neighbourhood, you will see."

And so it proved; and the exchanges became quicker and quicker every moment till it began to grow dark, and it was necessary for the people to be going home. The five skins remained in the possession of three strangers; viz. one cultivator, one Russian soldier placed as a guard over the silver, and a travelling merchant, who held three out of the five skins.

"How busy they have been all day!" observed Clara, as she turned homewards, after seeing the last trafficker pack up and depart. "They seem to have had as much buying and selling to do as if everybody had had a purse full of money."

"And so they have," replied Paul, who was carrying his purchase home in the shape of as heavy a load of grain as a strong man's back would bear; and groaning under it all the more discontentedly for knowing that, if he had but waited till the close of the day, he might have had a sledge into the bargain, on which to convey his burdens, or be conveyed himself, whenever he should have a rein-deer, or dogs from Kamtchatka to draw it. "They have as much

buying and selling to do, my dear, with little money as with much. The difference is, that when there is much, some of it lies still in the purse, or moves into only one or two new hands; while, where there is little, it flies round and round the market as fast as it can go from hand to hand."

It had never before struck Clara that any piece of money made more than one exchange. She thought that her mouse-skin was worth a pair of pattens, but forgot that if the person with whom she exchanged it did the same thing that she had done, it would become worth two pair of pattens; and if a third bargainer followed the example, it would become worth three pair. She now began to exclaim upon the prodigious value of money. Paul laughed at her for having fancied for a moment that there must be a piece of money for everything that is bought and sold.

"If," said he, "it was necessary for us to have a skin for every individual thing we want to buy, there would soon be an end of all the poor animals in Siberia. And if it was necessary for everybody in Russia to have a piece of coin for every article purchased, the Emperor would have to collect all the gold and silver that were ever dug out of the ground, and to be always digging more at a great expense. And, after all, the value of the money of the kingdom would be no greater than if there was only a tenth part of all this existing."

"Why, to be sure, a ruble that was used yesterday does just as well to use again to-day as a

new one; and my mouse-skin bought as many things just now as twenty mouse-skins once used, would have done. But some people lay by their ducats and rubles, as father used to do in Warsaw. If some lie idle in this way, must others go round faster, or will there be more money made?"

"That depends upon whether money is easy or difficult to be had, and on whether people want to make many exchanges. To-day, money was very difficult to be had, and so it passed round very rapidly; which happened to be the only way in which we could manage to have money enough to carry on our dealings with any briskness. 'Be quick, be quick,' we said to one another, 'for if we can make five pieces of money go through twenty bargains each, it will be nearly the same thing, as to the quantity of business done; as if ten pieces went through ten bargains each, or twenty pieces through five.'"

"It is not often that one of our skins belongs to five people in one day," observed Clara.

"True; and we never before had any pieces go through twenty hands."

"I think it is a fine thing to have very little money," said Clara.

"I do not. Many of us would have been very glad, before the market was over, to have caught more mice and killed more hares. I wish I could do it now, before morning, to baulk that merchant who finished off with pocketing three skins out of five."

"What did he do that for?"

"To make things cheaper than ever to-mor-

row; fill his sledge at our expense; and travel elsewhere to sell his goods, where money is cheaper and goods are dearer than here."

"How will he do so?"

"He will hide one of his skins; and then, when there will be only four in use, more goods still will be given for each, and he will be able to buy as much with two skins as he could buy to-night with three. Then he will begin to sell again; and, to raise the price of his goods, he will bring out the skin he laid by, and put it into circulation."

"Then goods will be just the price they are to-night. But if he sells, the skins will come back to him."

"Yes; and then if he chooses to lay by two, goods will be dearer than ever, and he may play the same trick over again with a larger profit, till he gets all our goods into his hands in return for one skin."

"What a shame!" cried Clara. "People will not let him do so, to be sure?"

"If they must have his goods, and cannot get any more money, they must submit; but it will not be for long. We must soon get more skins by some means or another. I do wish I had the fur cap they took from me when they gave me this horrible covering." And he pulled off and threw away the badge cap which the tender mercy of the Emperor had allotted to him. His shaven head, however, could not bear the cold without it, and he was obliged to let Clara pick it up and put it on again.

"I always thought," she said, "that it was a

very fine thing for goods to be cheap,—and it has been a fine thing for father and me to-day ; but yet it seems as if they ought to be dearer again to-morrow.”

“ And they should be, if I could make them so. You see, my dear, there are two sorts of cheapness, one of which is a good thing, and the other not. When it costs less trouble and expense, for instance, to grow corn than it did before, people will exchange more corn for the same quantity of tea or cloth or money than they did before ; and this cheapness is a good thing, because it is a sign of plenty. There is more corn, and no less tea or money. But when more corn is given for a less quantity of tea or money, not because there is more corn, but because the Emperor of China will not let us have so much tea, or the Emperor of Russia so much money as formerly, this kind of cheapness is a bad thing, because it is a token of scarcity. This was our case yesterday. We had a scarcity of skins, but no more goods of other kinds than usual.”

“ And there was a scarcity of skins in two ways,” observed the thoughtful little girl. “ When we have had more than we wanted to use as money, it answered very well to make leggings and mittens of them ; but now we could not get mouse-skin mittens if we wished it ever so much.”

“ Not without buying money with more goods than a pair of mittens can ever be worth.”

“ I never heard of buying money before,” said Clara, laughing.

“ Indeed ! In all money bargains, one party buys goods with money, and the other buys money with goods. How should countries that have no gold and silver mines procure their money in any other way ? England buys gold and silver from South America with cotton goods ; and the Americans get cotton goods by paying gold and silver, sometimes in coin, and sometimes in lumps of metal. These metals are sometimes, as you see, a commodity, and sometimes a medium of exchange, like our skins. If there happens to be plenty to be had, either of the one or the other, their value rises and falls, like the value of all other commodities,—according to the cost and trouble of procuring them, and a few other circumstances. If there happens to be a scarcity, their exchangeable value may be raised to any height, in proportion to the scarcity, and they cease to be commodities.”

“ And just the same, I suppose, whether they are in good condition or in bad ? My mouse-skin bought as many things to-day, worn and jagged as it was, as it would have bought if it had been new, and sleek, and soft.”

“ Yes ; but as a commodity it would now bear little value. If there were a hundred new ones in the market to-morrow, the old ones would scarcely sell for anything as mitten materials.”

“ To be sure. They would make very shabby, rotten mittens. But it is a good thing that we have not always this rich merchant here, unless *indeed* we could always get what skins we want. *He might play all kinds of tricks with us.*”

"Like some foolish kings with their people, y dear; but kings are more sure to be punished r such tricks than this merchant. When he s ruined us all, he can travel away, and enjoy s profits elsewhere; but kings who have put id money into the market under the name of od, or thought they could vary the quantity as ey pleased for their own purposes, have found emselves in a terrible scrape at last. When ere was too much coined money among the ople, some of it was sure to disappear——"

"Where did it go to?"

"If the people could manage to send it abroad where money prices were not so high, they d so. If not permitted to do this, it was easy , melt it down at home, and make cups and shes, and chains and watches of it."

"And then, if there was too little, I suppose ey made their plate and chains into coins again. ut could they do this without the king's leave?"

"The kings are not sorry to give leave, be- use the people pay governments something r having their metals coined. But whenever overnments meddle to injure the coin, or to revent its circulating naturally, they are sure to offer; for violent changes of price make many oor, while they make a few rich; and the consequence of this is that the government is not ell supported. The people are not only angry, at they become unable to pay their taxes."

"Do people know directly when more money sent out, or some drawn in?"

"Very soon, indeed; because great changes



of price follow. In this place now, if we see the same quantity of goods brought for the same number of people to buy, and our skins generally changing hands five times in the day, and prices remaining the same, we are sure that the same quantity of money is in use. If prices remain the same, and skins change hands eight times a-day, we know that there must be fewer skins in the market; and if prices fall very much at the same time, we may be sure that there is very little money indeed, and that everybody will be on the look-out to make more. If prices rise in an equal degree, it will be quite as plain that there are more skins than we want as money; and, presently, some of them will be made into mittens."

"But in such a place as this, it is very easy to count the skins, and observe who steals or hides, and who brings in a fresh supply."

"True; but in the largest empire it may be just as certainly known as here when there is more or less money afloat, by the signs I have mentioned, without our being able to look into every hole and corner where people are melting coins to be made into dishes or thimbles, or looking out their bars of gold and silver to be coined. Though you may not see all that may be done in the darkness of this night, you may possibly perceive something to-morrow which will make you quite sure that there has been a change in the supply of money."

Clara wished she might, since the cheapness of goods this day was not in reality an advantageous thing. She clearly saw that it was not so,

though she herself happened to have secured a vast return for her small stock of money. She perceived that whenever she and her father wanted to sell (which all were obliged to do in turn) they would have as much more than usual to give of labour or goods as they had this day received, unless the quantity of money in circulation could be increased.

"I suppose," sighed she, "if I could get at the little holes under those trees where the mice are asleep for the winter, I ought to kill as many of them as I could catch before morning. The snow is too deep, however. But I do wish we had something for money that might be had without killing such pretty little creatures."

Paul explained, very sagely, how right it was to sacrifice the inferior animals when man could be served by their deaths; and how much better it was that a score of field mice should be cut off in the midst of a deep sleep, than that there should be dispute and deprivation among a little society who had too many troubles already. He ended by asking on what terms Clara would part with her young rein-deer this night? On none whatever, she said at first. She had so pleased herself with the idea of feeding and training the animal; and her father was so delighted with her possession of it. But when she was reminded that money would at any time buy rein-deer, while it was an unique circumstance that a single rein-deer should supply a whole society with money, she began to see Paul's object in wishing to possess the animal, and referred him, with

some regrets, to her father for an arrangement of the terms of the bargain. They were soon settled. Paul did not want, for his own use, the money he meant to manufacture out of the hide in the course of the night. He only wished to prevent the rich merchant possessing himself of all the disposable goods of the settlement, and readily promised that Andreas should keep the carcase, and have half the funds provided out of the skin. Andreas heard slight sounds from one corner of the hut that night, which led him to think that his little daughter was crying herself to sleep, as quietly as she might, at the close of her day of trafficking; but he said to himself that children must learn to bear disappointments, whether about dolls or young rein-deer; and that it would have been a sin to deprive his neighbours of a stock of money, and himself of so fine a means of improving his resources, for the sake of a little girl's fancy to have a tame animal to play with. Clara would have said so too, if she had been asked; but her tears did not flow the less.

It was a busy night in Paul's hut. He put himself under the management of his wife, who was well skilled in handling hides; and before morning the skin was decently cleaned, and economically cut up, and a new supply of the circulating medium distributed among the dwelling of as many as chose to buy back of the merchant some of the articles he had obtained from them the day before; or, at least, to refuse *him* the power of making any more purchases *on terms so ruinous to them.*

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE PATRIOT'S ALTAR.

ALL possible pains were taken by the Russian superintendents of the mine to prevent the convicts under their charge from hearing anything of what was going forward in their own country, or even in Russia; and nothing would have been easier than to keep them in utter ignorance, if the Poles in the neighbourhood had all been miners, shut up during the day in the chambers of the earth, and at night in huts at the mouth of the mine. But those of them who were crown peasants were not so easily kept within bounds. Paul visited the hamlets on the shores of the Baïkal, and made acquaintance with every travelling merchant who could speak in his wife's tongue or his own; and Ernest was for ever on the look-out for parties of convicts on their way to Kamtchatka, and contrived to cross the path of several, while professedly out on a hunting expedition. He never failed to procure some information from these meetings, or to communicate it within a short time to his companions in exile. The hours of the night were their own; and there were many nights, even in the very depth of winter, when they could venture abroad to some one of the several places of meeting appointed for such occasions. The miners could sometimes foretell the approach of a procession of prisoners from Europe, by

what went on within the works. If there was more diligence used than in common to prepare certain quantities of silver for removal, it was a token that an escort was on the road, which was to be met by the guards of the treasure, in order to exchange their respective charges,—prisoners and precious metal. As often as Owzin was detained longer than usual in the galleries of the mine, or Taddeus was overworked in the smelting-house, Ernest prepared for a long walk across the steppe, or daily mounted the heights in his neighbourhood to watch for indications of a march along the horizon which bounded the vast plain of snow. It was forbidden to all persons whatever, except the armed peasants who formed a part of the escort, to follow the wag-gons which contained the royal treasure, or dog the heels of the personages in green and red who protected it. Since to follow was impossible, it only remained to precede the train ; and this Ernest did, keeping a little in advance, concealing himself in woods, or behind ridges of snow, and looking out from rock or tree for the glittering of sabres when the sun was above the horizon, and the glare of pine-torches after darkness came on. Having thus guided himself towards the point of the two processions meeting, he began his hunting, and managed to fall in with the party of convicts in time to be questioned whether the escort from Nertchinsk might be speedily expected, and to exchange signs and words with any of the prisoners who might be *his countrymen*.

He found himself aided in his object by the country people, whose compassion for the exiles is as remarkable as the hard-heartedness of the Russian guards. "Have you fallen in with the criminals?" asks a Russian soldier, sent out to reconnoitre. "I passed a company of unfortunates," is the reply. If bidden to chain two restive prisoners to their iron bar, the peasant obeys unwillingly, and takes the first opportunity of releasing them, and bearing their burden himself. Several such did Ernest fall in with, and interest in his cause; and when he had once learned to pardon their compassionate opposition to all fancies of escape, and to admit with them that the attempt would be insane, he thankfully accepted their good offices on his expeditions, and was grateful for the connivance of the two or three who could have told tales of certain midnight meetings on the shores of the Charmed Sea. Few dared to look abroad at such an hour in such a scene, or doubted that the chaunts they heard, and the red lights they saw flickering on the steep or among the dark pine stems, were connected with the spirits of the deep; but there were a few who could distinguish human forms hovering about the blaze, and shrewdly guess that the lake spirits would not perpetually sing of Warsaw.

It was mid-winter—a winter which already seemed as if it would never end—when Ernest set forth to seek traces of a party of "unfortunates" in the manner above described, and left directions that as many as wished for tidings

from Poland should meet him on the third night from hence, at an appointed spot overhanging the Baikal. He accomplished his object; was perceived from a distance with his rifle pointed, and apparently not regarding the procession—summoned to be questioned, and permitted to make inquiries in return. As usual, he received the oracular assurance, “Order reigns in Warsaw.” As usual, he caught the flashing glance, and marked the compression of lip with which the words were listened to by as many as were within hearing. But the train was not like any which he had before seen cross the desert. The convicts were Poles who had been enrolled as soldiers in the condemned regiments, and who, having shown symptoms of discontent, were being transported to serve as sentinels on the frontiers of China. As there would be no possibility of escape for themselves, it was thought that they would be trustworthy guardians of any exiles of a different class who might attempt it; the supposition going on the principle too commonly acted upon—that privation induces jealousy. All these poor men were objects of deep compassion to Ernest, who thought the lot of the military exile far more painful than his own, or that of his mining companions. The being under incessant supervision, and subjected to military punishments of the most barbarous kind were evils purely additional to those suffered by other classes of exiles. What this military punishment amounted to in some cases, he had the opportunity of perceiving in the instance

one of the prisoners who was conveyed in a kibitka; the injuries he had received from the knout rendering him incapable of walking.

As it was usual to leave under the care of the peasantry as many of the "unfortunates" as fell sick on the road, or were found unable to travel, Ernest was surprised that this soldier should be proceeding with the rest. He was told that the man himself desired not to be parted from his companions; and had persevered in his journey thus far at the risk of dying before he should reach the frontiers of China. Ernest thought it probable that he would consent to stop and be taken care of, if he could do so among his own countrymen; and he advanced to the vehicle for the purpose of conversing with those within.

"Are you Poles?" he asked in a low voice, and in his own tongue.

The sufferer tore open his clothes, and showed the well-known token,—the Polish eagle, branded upon his breast. He had impressed it there, as he was not allowed to carry the emblem about with him in any form in which it could be taken from him. A few more words communicated all that remained to be told,—in what capacity—civil, not military,—he had served the cause; how he fell under punishment; and, in short, that this was no other than Cyprian.

When he heard whom he was talking to, and how near he was to those whom he loved best, he no longer objected to be left behind on the



road. The only fear was lest his eagerness should be too apparent. With a solemn caution, Ernest left him, to say to the escort that he thought the prisoner in a very dangerous state, and that there was a hut a few wersts further on where he could be received and nursed till able to pursue his journey to the frontier. He added that this hut was in the near neighbourhood of Russian soldiers, who would be able to see that the convict did not escape on his recovery. The guard condescended to inquire of Cyprian himself whether he chose to remain; and observed that he must feel himself much worse since he had given over his obstinacy.

Ernest denied himself all further intercourse with the prisoners on the way, and seemed more disposed to divert himself with his rifle than to converse. When within sight of his own hut, he pointed it out very coolly, took charge of Cyprian as if he was merely performing a common act of humanity, and asked for directions as to pursuing the route to the frontiers when the sick man should have become again fit for duty. Nothing could appear simpler, or be more easily managed than the whole affair; and the procession went on its way, without either the guard or the remaining unfortunates having any idea that Cyprian was not left among perfect strangers.

There was but little time for intercourse at first. The hour of appointment was just at hand, and Alexander and Paul were gone to keep it, Ernest supposed, as their huts were empty.

"O, take me with you!" exclaimed Cyprian. "Only give me your arm, and let me try if I cannot walk. To think of their being so near, and I left behind alone! Cannot you take me with you?"

Ernest pronounced it impossible. Cyprian could not survive the fatigue, the exposure, the agitation; and, if he did, how was Sophia to bear the shock? By proving to him that it was only in his character of invalid that he could secure a day's permission to remain, he quieted him.

"And now," continued Ernest, "give me tidings that I may bear to those who are waiting for me. Briefly,—how fares it with our heritage?"

"Our heritage! Our patrimony!" exclaimed Cyprian, dwelling on the terms by which the Poles lovingly indicate their country. "Alas! will it ever be ours? They told you too truly—'Order reigns in Warsaw!'"

"But what kind of order? Repose or secret conspiracy? None are so orderly as conspirators while conspiring; and repose is impossible already."

"Alas! it is neither. There is order, because the disorderly, as the Emperor calls them, are removed day by day. There is no conspiracy, because all who could organize one are in chains like you, or badged like me;" and Cyprian tore with his teeth the black eagle which marked his uniform. Ernest observed, with a melancholy

smile, that not even this climate would blanch the Russian eagle.

"Therefore," continued he, "we have each a Polish eagle, caught at midnight, (when the superstitions of our enemies have blinded them;) slaughtered with patriotic rites; and preserved in secret." And, after making sure that no prying eyes were looking in, he drew out from a recess behind the screen, a large white eagle, stuffed with great care into a resemblance of the beloved Polish standard. Cyprian clasped his hands, as if about to worship it. Its presence was some consolation to him for Ernest's departure.

"But how," asked the latter, "are the brave conveyed away from Warsaw? On biers or in chains?"

"No one knows," replied Cyprian. "They who informed me can tell no more than that our friends are seen to enter their own houses at night, and in the morning they are gone. Some few are known to have been called to their doors, or into the streets, on slight pretences, and to have returned to their expecting households no more. Then there is silent weeping during the hours of darkness; and if grief is clamorous, it is shut into the inner chambers whence none may hear it. Thus order reigns in Warsaw."

"And is this all the comfort I may carry?" asked Ernest, hoarsely.

"No: there is yet more. Tell any who may be fathers that there is no danger of their children *growing up* traitors like themselves. The Em-

peror takes them under his paternal care, and teaches them, among other things,—loyalty.”

“And the mothers——”

“Are called upon to rejoice that the children will never be exposed to their fathers’ perils. There is much wonder at their ingratitude when they follow, with lamentations, the waggons in which their young sons are carried away to be put under a better training than that of parents.”

Ernest asked no more. These were tidings enough for one night. He strode on over the frozen snow, the fires which burned within him seeming to himself sufficient to convert this expanse of snow around him into a parched and drougthy desert. There was, however, something in the aspect of a Siberian mid-winter night which never failed to calm the passions of this ardent patriot, [or, at least, to give them a new and less painful direction. Ernest was of that temperament to which belongs the least debasing and most influential kind of superstition. He had not been superstitious in the days when there was full scope for all his faculties and all his energies in the realities of social life; but now, the deprivation of his accustomed objects of action, and the impression, at striking seasons, of unwonted sights and sounds, subjected him to emotions of which he could not, in his former circumstances, have framed a conception. Though he this night quitted his hut as if in desperate haste, he did not long proceed as if he feared being too late for his appointment. He lingered in the pine

wood to listen to the moaning and wailing which came from afar through the motionless forests, like the music of a vast Æolian harp. He knew that it was caused by the motion of the winds pent under the icy surface of the Charmed Sea ; but he listened breathlessly, as if they came from some conscious agents, whose mission was to himself. So it was also when the silent action of the frost in fissures of the rock at length loosened masses of stone, and sent them toppling down the steep, while the crash reverberated, and the startled eagle rushed forth into the night air, and added her screaming to the commotion. Then Ernest was wont to watch eagerly in what direction the bird would wing her flight, and regard as an omen for his country whether she once more cowered in darkness, or flew abroad to prevent the roused echoes from sleeping again.

When strong gusts of an icy sharpness swept suddenly through the clefts of the mountains to the north, carrying up the white canopy of the woods in whirling clouds which sparkled in the moonlight, and creating a sudden turmoil among the blackened pine tops, he watched whether they stooped and raised themselves again, or snapped off and laid low ; and involuntarily in them the interpreters of his doubts about the next struggle into which he and his country might enter.

Thus he lingered this night, and was the last of the little company appointed !

semble at their midnight altar. This altar was one of the mysterious sculptured or inscribed rocks which appear at rare intervals in these deserts, the records, it is supposed, of ancient superstitions. The one chosen by the Poles for their point of rendezvous, bore figures of animals rudely carved on a misshapen pedestal; and on a natural pillar which sprang from it were characters which no one within the memory of man had been found able to read. From this pedestal, the snow was duly swept before the exiles gathered round it to sing their patriotic hymns, or celebrate worship according to the customs of their country; and little Clara engaged that when the snow was gone, no creeping mosses should be allowed to deform the face of the altar. As for living things, they were too scarce and too welcome to be considered unclean, and the wild pigeons were as welcome to perch on this resting-place, after a weary flight over the Charmed Sea, as the swallow to build in the tabernacle of old. It was on the verge of the steep, where it plunged abrupt and fathoms deep into the green waters, that this altar stood; a conspicuous point which would have been dangerous but for the superstitions of all who lived within sight, since the blaze of the exiles' fire gleamed like a beacon on the height, and flickered among the pine stems behind, and shone from the polished black ice beneath.

As Ernest approached, unperceived, he first drew near to Sophia, who sat with folded arms

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on the verge of the rock, watching the white gleams of the northern lights, which shot up into the midheaven from behind the ridge of the opposite mountains, dimming the stars in that quarter, and contrasting strongly with the red glow of the fire which behind sent up wreaths of dim smoke among the rocks. Sophia's mood was less quiet than it should have been to accord with the scenery she was apparently contemplating. Neither superstition, nor any other influence seemed to have the power of soothing her. She was speaking, from time to time, in a querulous or an indifferent tone to some one who leaned against the altar on its shadowy side. It was Taddeus's voice which was heard occasionally in reply. The other Poles were collected round the fire; and their own voices, and the crackling and snapping of the burning wood, prevented their hearing that which it grieved Ernest's heart to listen to.

"Well, I do not know what you would have," said Sophia; "I came out this freezing night, instead of going to my warm bed, just because my mother looks so miserable whenever I wish to stay behind. I neither wish to worship, nor to be patriotic, nor to see you all degrading yourselves with your superstitions. It was for my mother's sake that I came, and what more would you have?"

"It is not that, Sophia. You know it is not that."

"O, you want me to bear about gravity in

my looks, and to seem wrought upon by what passes ; but that is going a step too far for my sincerity. There is no gravity in anything ; and I cannot look as if I thought there was ; and it is not my fault if my mother makes herself uneasy about my feeling so."

"No solemnity in anything ! Not in those quivering lights, shot forth from the brow of Silence ?"

"No. I used to think that there was in the lightning, and shrank from the flash lest it should destroy me. But we see no lightning here ; and these fires do not scorch. They are idle, aimless things ;—like all other things."

"Are your words aimless, Sophia, when they wound my mother and me ? It is well that my father does not hear them all."

"They are aimless," returned Sophia. "I have no object in anything I say or do. I thought we grew tired of that in our childhood, Taddeus. We were for ever planning and scheming ; and what has it all come to ? The arbour that we built,—and the many professions that we chose for Frederick and you,——Pshaw ! What childish nonsense it was !"

"And the protection I was to give to you, Sophia, if troubles arose ; and your dependence upon me,—was this childish dreaming ?"

"Was it not, Taddeus ? What has your protection been to me ? and how am I dependent on you, or any one ? My happiness, indeed, seems to have depended on you more than any power



but fate would have allowed. See what has come of that too!"

"O, Sophia! if I innocently destroyed your happiness, did not my own go with it? Have I not——"

"O, I have no doubt of all that; and I never thought of blaming anybody. It only proves how lightly and strangely things befall; and after this, you want me to see order and gravity in the march of events, and to march gravely with them. No! I have tried that too long; so I shall sit where I am while they sing yonder. You had better go. Go, if you think it does you any good."

But Taddeus still lingered, while his sister kept her eyes fixed on the shooting lights.

"Sister!" he began, but seeing her writhe under the word, he added, in a low voice, "There is something in that word which touches you, however."

"No gravity,—no solemnity," she replied, laughing bitterly. "It carries no meaning but what old prejudice has put into it."

"No thoughts of the arbour we built? No remembrance of the days when you put a sword into my boyish hands, and a helmet on my head, and said you would nurse my infirmities and soothe my banishment, if either should befall me for freedom's sake?"

"You came out of the battle without a wound," replied Sophia, hastily.

"But not the less am I maimed for freedom's

sake. O, Sophia! what would you have had me do? Think of the oath! Think of the twenty-five years of vowed service——”

Sophia started up, and with a struggle repressed a fierce cry which had began to burst from her lips. She turned her eyes upon her brother with a look of unutterable hatred, and walked away down a winding path, in an opposite direction from the group behind the altar.

Ernest drew near to the despairing Taddeus, and was about to communicate his marvellous news; but the brother could not for a moment cease pouring out his boiling thoughts to one who understood their misery.

“To be so hated,—to be so wronged! And to be able to offer no excuse that does not pierce her heart, and make her passion more bitter than ever! And to think how more unhappy she is than even I——”

“We must lead her to embrace your consolation, and mine, and that of all of us. Come to our worship. Let it compose you, and perhaps she may return and listen. Perhaps she may find in it something——”

“Let it go on,” said Taddeus. “The more wretched we are, the more need for prayer. My mother, too, listens for her children’s voices, and she shall not have to mourn for all.”

So saying, the two friends summoned their companions, and there, in a few moments, might be heard the mingled voices, ringing clear from the steep through the still midnight air, as they chaunted their prayer:—

God!—Scorched by battle-fires we stand  
 Before thee on thy throne of snows;  
 But, Father! in this silent land,  
 We seek no refuge nor repose:  
 We ask, and shall not ask in vain,—  
 "Give us our heritage again!"

Thy winds are ice-bound in the sea;  
 'Thine eagle cowers till storms are past;  
 Lord! when those moaning winds are free,  
 When eagles mount upon the blast,  
 O! breathe upon our icy chain,  
 And float our Poland's flag again!

'Twas for thy cause we once were strong;  
 Thou wilt not doom that cause to death!  
 O God! our struggle has been long;  
 Thou wilt not quench our glimmering faith!  
 Thou hear'st the murmurs of our pain,—  
 "Give us our heritage again!"

"Who," said Ernest, emphatically, when the service was ended—"who will assist me to secure another white eagle?"

All understood at once that a countryman had joined their company. No further preparation was necessary for the story which Ernest had to tell; and in a few moments, the hardier men of the party were scaling the slippery rocks in search of their prey, while Lenore was looking for the path by which her daughter had descended, that she might join her and communicate the intelligence.

"Mother!" cried a gentle voice to her, as she was about to go down. She turned round, and saw Sophia leaning against a tree where she must have heard all. "Mother," repeated Sophia, scarcely audibly, "is this true?" and at the sight of Lenore's faint but genuine smile,

the poor girl laid her head on the shoulder which was formerly the resting-place of her troubles, and, once more,—after a long and dreary interval of estrangement,—wept without control.

Lenore gently led her towards the altar, on which they both leaned.

“My child,” she said, “before we go to him, answer me what I ask. You do not, you say, believe that yon constellation is guided in its glittering round. You do not believe that the storm-bird, buffeted in its flight, is guided to its nest at last. Do you believe that Cyprian has been guided hither, or is it one of the events in which there is no seriousness, no import, that you are thus brought together in the heart of the desert?”

Sophia answered only by sinking down on her knees, and bowing her head upon the pedestal; but her sobs had ceased. When she looked up, it was Taddeus that supported her. She did not now start from his touch, but regarded him with a long gaze, like that with which she had parted from him when he went out to battle for Poland. It melted him into something more like self-reproach than all her past conduct had excited.

“You forgive me at last!” he cried. “Say you forgive me, Sophia!”

“Forgive *you*!” she exclaimed. “You who have fought; you who have suffered; you who have forborne!—And what have I forborne? I have——”

“You have been wounded in spirit. You

have suffered more than any of us, and therefore far be it from us to remember anything against you, Sophia. Now, your worst suffering is at an end, and you will be a comfort again to my mother,—to all of us.”

Lenore did not join her children when she saw them hurrying away together in the direction of Ernest's dwelling. She followed them with her eyes as long as she could distinguish them between the trees of the wood, and then turned, strong in a new trust, to feed the fire, and await the appearance of her companions. It was not long before the screaming echoes told her that they had succeeded in their search; and presently after, the red embers died out upon the steep, and none were left to heed how the northern aurora silently sported with the night on the expanse of the Charmed Sea.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### WISDOM FROM THE SIMPLE.

Of all the party of exiles, Andreas was the one whose troubles grew the fastest as time rolled on. The family of Owzin were consoled by the return of domestic peace; Sophia becoming more and more like her former self as Cyprian slowly, very slowly, repaid the cares of his nurses by his improvement in health. Paul made himself comfortable, as he would have done in the Barbary desert, if sentenced to transportation thither the

next year. He was not a man to doubt, in the intervals of his sighs for Poland, that he could find a wife and a home in any corner of the earth. What was in Ernest's mind nobody knew; but there was a new cheerfulness about him which it was difficult to account for, as he continued to disclaim all definite hope for Poland. He looked and moved like one who had an object, and yet it was impossible to conceive of any aim which could interest him through any other principle than his patriotism. Little Clara would have been the happiest of all, if her father had but allowed it. She thought less and less of Warsaw as fresh occupations and interests occurred to her in her new country. The opening of the spring brought a variety of employment to the industrious little girl. When the plates of ice with which she had made double window panes began to lose their clearness, and keep out the light rather than keep in the warmth,—when she had twisted and netted all the flax she could procure into fishing-nets,—when even the broadest pattens she could make or buy would not support the wearer in the melting snow,—and when, above all, the winter stock of food began to fail, she prepared herself eagerly for new devices, and watched day by day the advance of the season. She had not to wait long; and when the south winds began to blow, the suddenness of the change in the face of things startled her. As if by magic, a few genial days divided the mountainous district into two regions, as different in aspect as if tracts had been brought from the

torrid and frigid zones and joined together in one night. While on the north side of every mountain all was white and silent as ever, the south was brilliant with alpine vegetation, and the freed torrents were leaping noisily from rock to rock. The wild apricot put forth its lilac buds, and the rhododendron its purple flowers, over many a hill side: the orchis, the blue and white gentian, and the Siberian iris sprouted from the moss beneath the forest trees; and the blossoming elder and a variety of water lilies made the most impassable morasses as gay as the meadows of a milder climate. It was not from any idea that holiday time was come that Clara enjoyed this change. She knew that she must work all the year round; but it was much pleasanter to work in the open air than for eight months together within four walls, by the light of ice windows, and the close warmth of a brick oven. She now collected salt from the salt ponds of the steppe as fast as they melted; shovelled away the remaining snow wherever lilies were sprouting, that she might dig up the roots for food; and walked along the shores of the great lake when its tumbling waters once more began to heave and swell, and watched for whatever treasures they might cast up upon the beach. She even conceived the ambitious project of digging for a spring of water, as all that could otherwise be procured was either salt, muddy, or bitter; but here she was foiled, as she might have known she would be, if she had taken an opinion upon the subject. She dug successfully to the depth of one foot, and then found

the soil frozen too hard for her to make any impression. She tried again a month later, and got down another foot; but, as she afterwards learned, the strongest arm and the best tools can penetrate no deeper than two yards, before frost comes again and spoils the work.

Her father thought her a good child in respect of industry; but he acknowledged this with little pleasure, for no industry whatever could make a man rich in such a place. The longer he lived there, the more convinced he became of the dreadful truth, and therefore the more miserable he grew. Yet he was rich in comparison of his companions. He had hoarded many skins, and had more furniture and clothes than anybody else. But skins would soon be depreciated in value, he feared, from their abundance; and where would be his wealth then, unless he could foresee in time into what form it would be most profitable to transmute his hoard, while it retained its value as a representative of wealth, and before it should again become also a commodity? Night after night, when he came home from work in the mine, he dreaded to hear of an acquisition of skins. Day after day, did he look with jealous eyes on the heaps of silver which he must not touch, and long for the security of a metallic currency; that arrangement of civilized life which he most regretted. He saw—everybody saw—that some new medium of circulation must be adopted, if they wished to improve their state by further exchange with their neighbours; but the suggestion which was at last adopted did not come from him,



or from any of the wiser heads. It was Clara who introduced a new kind of money.

In walking along the muddy verge to which a spring flood had reached, and where it had deposited various curiosities, she observed, among little heaps and beds of shells, some very remarkable bones. Though light to carry, they were so large that she could not imagine what animal they could have belonged to. She collected all that she could find within a long space on either side the river, and carried her lap full to Paul, the friend of all others who, with the advantage of his wife's help, could most frequently and readily enlighten her in any matter of difficulty.

Emilia explained that these were the bones of a monster which had been made by the spirits of the Charmed Sea to carry them high and dry on its back through the deep waters: and that having once displeased them by diving in the deepest part, they had, as a punishment, chained it down at the bottom of the neighbouring river, whence its bones were cast up as often as the spring floods overspread the country. Clara wondered at the spirits for not swimming or flying over at once, instead of taking so much trouble to create and then destroy a monster; and she liked Paul's account of the matter better than his wife's. Paul was not aware that spirits had anything to do with mammoths elsewhere, and did not believe that they had here, or that the mammoth *ought* to be called a monster. He simply called *the mammoth* a huge animal, such as is not seen

in these days, and any traces of which, therefore, are a curiosity. He advised Clara not to throw away these curious bones.

"Papa will not let me keep them," she replied. "He will sell them, if he can find anybody to buy."

"I do not know who should do that, my dear. We have no cabinets of curiosities in such a place as this."

"I do think," said Clara, after a moment's thought, "that these bones would make very good money. You see, we could easily find out exactly how many may be had, and it can never happen, as it does with the skins, that we shall have twice as many one day as the day before."

"It may happen, my dear, that a second flood or storm may throw up more bones. It is not likely, to be sure, that such a thing should come to pass twice in one season; but it is possible."

"And if it does," said Clara, "could not we agree that some one person should take care of them; or that whatever bones are found should belong to us all, and be put in one particular place, to lie till we want more money? We cannot do this with skins, because they are useful in other ways, and it would be very hard to prevent anybody from getting as many as he could; but nobody would think it hard that he might not keep mammoth bones, because they would be of no use to him except for money."

"But would they not be silly kept for money, Clara? Would every one bring in the mammoth bones he might find to the treasury?"

"If they would trust me," said the little girl, "I would go out after a storm or a flood, and bring in any that might be lying about. But think how very seldom this would happen; and how very often we get a fresh supply of skins!"

"Very true, Clara; and I, for one, would trust you to bring home all you might find. But there is more to be considered than you are aware of before we change our currency; and I very much doubt whether your father, among others, would agree to it."

"You would give him as much of our new money as is worth the skins he has laid by," said Clara, "or he would not hear of the change; and indeed it would not be at all fair. O yes; everybody must be paid equal to what he has at present; and if that is properly done, I should think they will all like the plan, as it will be less easy than ever to cheat or make mistakes. You see so few of these bones are like one another that, when once different values are put upon them, one may tell at a glance what they stand for, as easily as one may tell a ruble from a ducat. And then, again, there can be no cheating. If we were to clip and break off for ever, one could not make several pieces of bone into a whole bone, as one may with skins, or with gold and silver."

"But these bones will wear out in time, Clara; and some will crumble to pieces sooner than others."

"Not faster than from year to year," argued Clara. "And next spring, when perhaps we

can get more, it will be very easy to give out new ones, and take in the old, and break them up entirely before everybody's eyes. O, I think this is the best sort of money we have thought of yet."

Paul agreed with her, and promised to call the little company together to consult about the matter.

The first thing that struck everybody was that these bones would be without some of the most important qualities which recommend coined money as a medium of exchange.

"What are we to say to their value?" asked Taddeus. "There is no cost of production, except the little trouble and time Clara will spend in picking them up."

"It is plain that they will have no value in themselves," observed Paul, "but only such as we shall put upon them by common agreement."

"That is," said Ernest, "they will be a sign of value only, and not a commodity. Will a mere sign of value serve our purpose as a standard of value? That is the question. For the thing we most want is a standard of value. It was in this respect that our skins failed us."

"The bones will serve our own little party as a standard of value, well enough," replied Paul. "The difficulty will be when we come to deal with our neighbours, who not only use a different currency, but to whom mammoth bones are absolutely worthless. When we used skins, it was difficult to impress upon traders the full value at which we estimated our money; but it had some

real value with them from its being a commodity as well as a sign."

"Then we have to choose between the two inconveniences," observed Ernest; "whether to fix a standard which none will agree to but ourselves, but which will serve our purpose well; or whether to use a medium of exchange whose value is acknowledged by the neighbouring traders, but which is, in fact, no standard to us, as it varies with the success or failure of every shooting expedition."

"What a pity it seems," observed Paul, "that all the world cannot agree upon some standard of value! What a prodigious deal of trouble it would save!"

"And where," asked Ernest, "would you find a commodity which is held in equal esteem in all countries, and by all classes? Even gold and silver, the most probable of any, would never do. There are parts of the world where lumps of them are tossed about as toys: where they are had without cost of production; while here, you see what an expensive apparatus is required to work out any portion of them;—an expense of capital and of human machinery——"

Paul, dreading this part of the subject, interrupted him with,—

"Well, but why have any commodity at all? If we cannot find any existing thing which all would agree to value alike, why not have an imaginary thing? Instead of saying that my *bow* is worth a pound of cinnamon, and a pound of cinnamon worth three pairs of scissors, why

not say that the bow and the pound of cinnamon are worth nine units, and each pair of scissors worth three units? What could be easier than to measure commodities against one another thus?"

"Commodities whose value is already known, I grant you, Paul: but what would you do with new ones whose value is unknown? It is to measure these that we most want a standard."

"We must estimate the cost of production of the new article, and compare it with——"

"Aye; with what? With some other commodity, and not with an ideal standard. You see it fails you at the very moment you want it. When we measure our lances against one another, we can express their comparative length by saying that one measures three and the other four spaces,—a space being merely an imaginary measure; but if we want to ascertain the length of a pine stem which has fallen across our path, we must reduce this imaginary measure to a real one. Nothing can be used as a standard which has not properties in common with the thing to be estimated. That which has length can alone measure length; and that which has value can alone measure value."

"How then can an ideal standard of value be used at all?"

"Because an ideal value alone is referred to it. But that abstract value is obtained through the reality which is ascertained by the comparison of commodities. When this abstraction is arrived at, an abstract standard may serve to express it; but new commodities must be mea-

sured by a standard which is itself a commodity, or a tangible sign which is, by general agreement, established in its place."

"Then, after all, we must come round to the point that coined metals are the best kind of money, admitting, as they do, an ineffaceable stamp of value, and thus uniting the requisites of a sign and a commodity."

"The best, at all events, up to a certain point in the progress of society, and, in general, till all societies which make mutual exchanges have reached that point. Neither we, nor the travelling merchants of Siberia, nor the cultivators with whom we deal, have yet reached this point; and there is no doubt that it would be greatly for our advantage to be possessed of coined metals as a medium of exchange. As we cannot have them, these mammoth bones must answer our purposes. They promise to do so better than any device we have yet made trial of."

Some one suggested that a metal medium might be procured by a little trouble and expense, if it should be thought worth while. Most of the Mongolian women they saw had small weights of virgin gold or silver fastened to their braids of hair, and might be easily prevailed on to part with them; and some persons in the present company had chanced to pick up morsels of silver in the beds of streams, and among the fragments of rock on the mountain side. Where would be the difficulty of impressing marks upon these, and thus instituting a sort of rude coinage? It was, however, agreed that

the temptation of clipping pieces of precious metal of an irregular form would be too strong to be safely ventured ; to say nothing of the cost of production, which must be disproportionately heavy in the case of a small society which had no apparatus for facilitating the work of coining.

It would be difficult, Ernest observed, to have any coin of a low denomination, as the cost of production would confer a high value on the smallest fragments of gold or silver ; and, as for lead, it was too plentiful, and too easily melted and marked, to be made money of in their district. It appeared to Taddeus that there was no objection to their society having a new commodity of considerable arbitrary value in its possession, if it was once settled by what party the expense of its preparation should be defrayed. Some authority would of course be instituted by which the work of coining would be undertaken. Would the labour be bestowed freely by that party ? If not, by whom ?

“ Why should we expect,” asked Ernest, “ that any one should undertake so troublesome an office without reward ? I know it is expected of governments, and I think unreasonably, that they should issue money from the mint without charge for coining it ; unreasonably, because, supposing the supply to be restricted, it is exposing the state to too great hazard of a deficiency, and the government to the danger of an incessant drain, to make, by arbitrary means, the exchangeable value of coin equal with that of bullion ; and because, supposing the supply to



be left unrestricted, not only is this danger much increased, but great partiality would be shown to the holders of the precious metals by conferring gratis an additional value on their commodity. Those who, by having their metals coined by the government, are saved the trouble and expense of weighing and assaying them in the shape of bullion, may as reasonably be made to pay for this advantage as those who give a piece of broad-cloth into the hands of the tailor to receive it back in the shape of a coat. Among ourselves, therefore, the fair way would be, if we adopt a metal medium, first to establish a little mint in some corner of the smelting-house, and then to issue our money, if the quantity was restricted, at a higher value than the unformed metal would bear in the market if unrestricted, under the condition that a certain portion should be clipped off each bit before it was stamped, in order to defray the expenses; or that every one who brought metal should bring payment for the advantage of having it made into money."

"We cannot afford this yet," observed Paul. "Let us begin picking up gold and silver whenever we meet with it, in order to such an arrangement hereafter; but, meanwhile, let us be satisfied with our mammoth bones."

Andreas, who liked none of these speculations on the effect of change, because he did not like change, protested vehemently against the substitution of bones for skins, or metals for either. *Nothing*, he declared, could be so disastrous to *all trading societies* as alterations in the currency.

They invaded the security of property, altering the respective values of almost all exchangeable articles, rendering every man in the community, except him who has nothing, utterly uncertain of the amount of his property, and arbitrarily reversing the conditions of the wealthy and the moderately provided. Ernest allowed all this to be true in the case of a large society, where the machinery of exchanges is complicated, and contracts subsist which comprise a considerable extent of time. In small societies, also, he allowed, that such a change is an inconvenience not to be lightly incurred ; but, in the present case, there was necessarily a choice of evils. Their present currency was liable to excessive and uncontrollable fluctuations. Would it be better to continue suffering under these, or to undergo the inconvenience and trouble at once of valuing the property of each member of the society, and fixing the denominations of their medium accordingly ? As there were no contracts existing between themselves or with their neighbours, no stocks of goods laid by whose value could be depreciated or increased, it seemed to him that the change would be one of pure advantage, and that the sooner it was made the better.

Every body but Andreas thought so too, and all were willing to conciliate him by winking at his extraordinary accumulation of skins, and to buy off his opposition by giving him a noble stock of the new money in consideration of the loss he must sustain by their being no longer any thing more in the market than a commodity.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PATRIOT'S MARTYRDOM.

As the summer advanced, and Cyprian seemed recovering completely from the dreadful state in which the infliction of the knout had left him, anxious thoughts began to take possession of the whole party. The day must be approaching when he would be sent for to resume his military duty; that service which was unutterably loathsome to him in the bare idea, and which must now be more than ever degrading from his having undergone an ignominious punishment. The slightest remark on the improvement in his health, on the advance of the season, or on the destination of any of his exiled countrymen, threw him into an agitation; and there was one circumstance which excited his indignant surprise to a degree which made it difficult to keep his feelings to himself. This was Ernest's curiosity concerning all that he had undergone; a curiosity which seemed to have no consideration for the pain such recitals must give to one who must again undergo the miseries he described. It was marvellous that one like Ernest—so generous to the feelings of others, so sensitive in his own—should be perpetually on the watch for mention of all the details of tyranny which Cyprian could give from his own experience, but would fain have withheld.

"Ask me no more," cried Cyprian, one day,

with a look of agony. "I will tell you anything you please about our black bread and miserable bedding, and about our night service and day slavery; but ask me no more about our officers' treatment of us, for I cannot bear to think of it."

"You must tell me more," replied Ernest, fixing his eyes upon him with an indescribable expression of eagerness. "So he made you all shout that infernal cry in praise of Nicholas, every night and morning?"

"Aye; and as often besides as he chose to suspect any one of discontent; be it once a week or ten times a day. In a little while, my heart heaved sick at the very sound of it, and when my turn came, my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth, if the day was as cold as Christmas day in Kamtchatka. I could not make light of it, and wink aside like some of them. It would have been well if I could, when the worse struggle came; except that, to be sure, I should not have been here now."

"So he insisted on more than the shout that day? Tell me about it."

"I thought I had told you before," said Cyprian, impatiently, and he spoke very rapidly as he proceeded. "We made some little difficulty about stripping the country people of their provisions for our own use, and just offered to go without our full rations till more were brought in. He called this mutiny, and began to talk about Poland,—the blasphemous wretch!—and called upon us to shout, as usual. I waited a moment to get voice; he marked me, and ordered me,

not only to shout, but to sing a damned chorus about Praga that they boast they sang when——”

“ Well, well, I know which you mean. Go on.”

“ I would not, and could not sing it, happen what might; and so I told him.”

“ How should you ?” said Ernest, with a grim smile. “ You who always said, when you had no thought of being a soldier, that it revolted you to see men made machines of; as soldiers are under the best management. How should you bear to be made something so much worse than a machine,—a slave with the soul of a free man,—a mocking-stock while you were full of gloomy wrath? No! helpless you must be; but you could at least make your slavery passive,—one degree above the lowest.”

“ Passive enough I made it,” said Cyprian, covering his face with his hands. “ They could make nothing of me,—except the one thing they did not choose to make me—a corpse! I hoped to die under it,—I meant it,—and I supposed they meant I should; for I have known many an one killed under the knout for a less offence; but they let me live, just to go through it again; for that hellish chorus will I never sing;—or never, at least, at that man’s bidding.”

“ Never; you never shall!” cried Ernest, fervently.

Cyprian looked at him surprised, and said,

“ Do you know, Ernest, I would not have borne from any other man such questioning about all these matters as I have taken patiently from you,”

"Patiently!" repeated Ernest, with a sad smile.

"Yes, Sir, patiently, as you may agree with me, if you happen to suppose that I can feel like you. You stalk off into the woods, or look as if you were going to curse the universe, the moment any one touches you about Poland; and you expect me to sit still and be questioned about my own degradation and torture, when you know that every tale I tell you is a picture of what is to come."

"Well, well, forgive me. You know my interest in you——"

"Many thanks for it, Ernest! A very considerate interest indeed! Why, your never catechizing me before Sophia shows that you remember that it is not the pleasantest subject in the world; but you do not give me the benefit of it."

"You shall question me as much as you like when I have like tales to tell."

"And when will that be? I have told you a hundred times that your life of a serf is beatitude in comparison with that of a private in the condemned regiments; especially if he happens to have been a patriot."

And Cyprian went on to draw the comparison, to which Ernest listened with the same grave smile. It was pardonable in Cyprian to take this for a smile of self-gratulation, and therefore to feel something as like contempt as any one had ever dared to feel for Ernest.

"We will compare notes hereafter, when we have both had our experience," observed Ernest, quietly.

"Aye, in the next world, where I shall soon be waiting for you; for I consider that, in going to the frontiers of two countries, I am going to the frontiers of two worlds. If they do not knout me to death, my heart will certainly burst one of these days. And then Sophia,—you must— But no; she will not take a word or a kind office from any one when I am away, they say. Well, I shall have my story ready for you when you follow me past those frontiers we were speaking of; for I shall not mind telling it there, nor will you perhaps care to hear it;—in a passionless state——"

"Passionless!" cried Ernest. "A passionless state hereafter! I tell you, Cyprian, if our Polish eagle does not soar to me with tidings which shall feed my passion of patriotism, I will come down and vent it, as if I were still a mortal man."

"Hush, hush! how do we know——"

"Full as well as you when you talk of a passionless state."

"I wish this were so," muttered Cyprian.

"Do not wish that, Cyprian. There are passions which may work out their natural and holy issues even in these wilds. Let us not repudiate them; for they become more necessary to the life of our being in proportion as others are violently stifled or slowly starved out. The next time you see yon star rising between those two peaks, remember that I told you this."

Cyprian inwardly groaned at the thought that *before the time of that rising should have arrived,*

he might be far out of sight of the two peaks ; and he began already to hate that particular star.

When it next appeared, some nights after, he again inwardly groaned ; but it was with shame, and a different kind of grief from that with which he had anticipated misery to himself and Sophia. Ernest had slipped away in the night to meet the summons which was on the way for Cyprian, and was now journeying towards the frontier,—in what direction no one knew ; so that he could not be overtaken and remonstrated with. There would have been little use in such a measure, if it had been practicable ; for Ernest was not one to change his purposes.

The only person whom he saw before his departure was Clara ; and that was for the purpose of leaving a message, as there were no writing materials within reach, and also of accomplishing the change of dress which was necessary to his passing for Cyprian. He called her up, and employed her to get possession of Cyprian's uniform, on some pretence which should keep him out of suspicion of being concerned ; and when he had put it on, he gave his own clothes into her charge.

“ Give him these, my dear, when he wakes, and tell him that I leave him my hut and land too ; and my name,—Number Seven. Sophia will show him the way to our altar, and she will help him to find out whether what I said was true, when we were looking at yonder star over the mountain top. Be sure you tell him this.”

“ But will not you be back to tell him yourself ? ”



"No. We have planned when and where to speak about this again; as he will remember.— And now go to bed, Clara, and thank you for helping me. Have you any thing more to say, my dear?" he continued, in answer to an uncertain, beseeching look she cast upon him. "If you have any troubles, tell me them; but be quick."

"I do not know what to do," replied Clara, sinking into tears. "I wish I knew whether I ought to tell. My father, . . . he is getting so very rich; and I had rather he should not, unless other people do; but he would be so angry if I showed any body."

"Why should you show your father's hoards, my dear? Who has any business with them but himself?"

"No, no; it is not a hoard. It is not any thing he has saved."

"Then it is something that he has found. He has lighted upon a treasure, I suppose. That is the reason why he has grown so fond of strolling towards the Baikal lately. The peasants thought they were making a believer of him; but we could not understand it; though, to be sure, we might have guessed how it was that money had become so plentiful lately. He has found a fossil-bed, no doubt. Do you know where it is?"

Clara nodded, and whispered that it was she who had discovered it.

"Indeed! Well; you have done all you can do, and now you may leave it to chance to discover the matter. Meanwhile, take this basket-

full of bones,—all the money I have,—and divide them equally among every body but your father. It will make his share worth less, you know, to give every body else more, and this will help to set matters straight till the secret comes out, which it will do, some day soon.”

“ I wish it may,” said Clara, “ and yet I dread it. Paul’s wife peeps and prys about every where ; and as often as she goes towards the lake, my father frowns at me and says—‘ You have told Emilia.’ But how ashamed I shall be when it comes out!—What will you do without your money when you come back ? Had not I better lay it by for you, where nobody can touch it till you come to take it away yourself ? In one of the caves——”

“ If you do,” said Ernest, smiling, “ some learned traveller will find it some hundreds of years hence, and write a book, perhaps, to describe an unaccountable deposit of fossil remains. No, Clara. When Cyprian and I have the conversation we have planned, we shall want no money ; and he and the rest had better make the most of it in the meanwhile. You are a good little daughter, and I need not tell you to do what you can for your father,—whatever he desires you that you do not feel to be wrong.”

“ Pumping and all,” sighed Clara.

“ Pumping ! I did not know we had such a grand thing as a pump among us.”

“ It is in the mine,” said Clara, sadly. “ The water drains in to the gallery where my father works, and he thinks I can earn something by

pumping ; and he says I shall be very safe beside him."

"What can he mean?" cried Ernest. "Such a pursuit of wealth is absolutely insane. What can he ever do with it in a place like this?"

"He thinks that we may get leave to go to Tobolsk when he has enough to begin to trade with. He asks me how I should like to be one of the richest people in Tobolsk when he is dead. I had much rather stay here ; and I am sure I do not care whether we have twenty or a hundred bones laid by, when we have once got all that we want to eat, and dress and warm ourselves with. I wish he would not talk of going to Tobolsk."

"If we can get back to Poland——"

"O ! you are going there !" cried Clara, with sparkling eyes.

Ernest shook his head mournfully, kissed the little girl's forehead, and departed, leaving her looking after him till he disappeared in the silvery night haze. Ernest passed himself for Cyprian at his new destination ; and the officer who was expecting him was agreeably surprised at his proving so much better a soldier than he had been represented. Unspoiled (strange to say) in body and mind by the knout, and always prepared with a dumb obedience which was particularly convenient on such a station, he became a sort of favourite, and was well reported of. The only thing that ever made him smile *was the periodical assurance of this, for which he was expected to be grateful.* He was wont

to receive it with an expression of countenance which, as it could not be interpreted, afforded no tangible ground of offence ; and he continued to pass for one of the least troublesome of the exiled Poles who were stationed along the frontier.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PATRIOT'S VOW.

It was a stormy evening when the little company assembled round their altar to celebrate the marriage of Cyprian and Sophia. The long summer day was drawing to a close amid an unusual commotion of the elements. There was no rain, but the wind swept over the waters, and the sheeted lightning came forth from its hiding place among the clouds on the mountain top. Little Clara was alone on the steep long before the rest of the party came. She never forgot that the altar was her charge ; and she was now employed in cleansing the pedestal from the young mosses which spread rapidly in the crevices, and among the mysterious characters of the inscription. She could not help being startled by the lightning, and wishing that the thunder would come at once to mingle with the dash and roar of the waves below, instead of waiting till the mass of clouds should grow still more formidable, and overspread the whole sky. Once

or twice she wished herself with her father in the cave, where she knew he was gone to bring away more mammoth bones; and then again she felt that the sense of guilt which always beset her in that place would make it much more terrible in a storm than her present solitude made the exposed spot on which she stood. She was heartily glad, however, when Paul and his wife made their appearance.

"You need not have troubled yourself to pile this wood, Clara," said Paul. "No fire can be kept in while such a wind as this is blowing."

"Do you know," said Clara, "one blow of the north wind as I came up changed the look of everything it touched. All the pools had a little crust of ice over them in a minute, all the leaves of the plants in the open places turned red and yellow, and the blossoms shrivelled up ready to drop off."

On hearing this, Emilia looked very grave. The wind that did this while the sun was high on a summer day, was an ill-boding wind, she whispered; and was sent to tell that the sea spirits were about to do some mischief. She could not recover her cheerfulness when the rest of the exiles came, and rites went forward which made all but herself almost regardless of the storm.

They waited some time for Andreas; but as his sympathy was of the least possible consequence, they at length proceeded without him, supposing him too busy after his pelf to bestow *any thought* on the first marriage celebration *which had*, as far as they knew, taken place be-

tween Poles in these depths of the wilderness. It differed from the marriage celebrations of the people in the neighbourhood only in the addition of the oath which the parties were now met to take.

They had already been married in the usual manner, with the hearty good-will of the Russian superintendents, who were glad of all such symptoms among the exile crown peasants of a willingness to settle down in quiet, like those of their neighbours who had not been rebels. A dowry had even been offered with Sophia ; but this was rejected. She could not have taken the oath if she had touched the Emperor's bounty with so much as her little finger.

This oath was merely a more solemn form of their common vow never to consider Siberia as their home, the Emperor as their sovereign, or any social obligations here entered into as interfering with the primary claims of their country. They and their children were, in short, never to acquiesce in the loss of their heritage, even though their banishment should extend to the thousandth generation. A new clause was added on the present occasion. The newly-married pair vowed never to rest till they had procured the release of Ernest from his ignominious lot, and his restoration to at least the degree of comparative freedom which he had sacrificed for them. This vow, spoken with a faltering voice, because in a nearly hopeless spirit, was drowned in the utterance ; and the memory of Ernest was honoured in silence by his companions when

they had once given his name to the rushing winds.

The storm increased so much that it became dangerous to remain on the heights; and the rest of the observances were hastily gone through, in increasing darkness and tumult. A tremendous swell of the waters below caused most who were present to start back involuntarily, as if they feared to be swept away even from their high position. Sophia alone was undaunted,—not as she would have been a few months before, but because a new life, which bore no relation to external troubles and terrors, was now animating her heart and mind.

“Let us stay somewhere near till this has blown over,” said she, leading the way to a little cave below, where they might be sheltered from the wind. “I should like, if it were only for Emilia’s sake, that we should see these waters calm again before we go home. There is no harm in humouring her superstition, even supposing that none of us share it.”

Taddeus and Lenore smiled at one another when they found Sophia the first to think of humouring superstition. They followed her, but, on arriving at the mouth of the cave, could obtain no entrance. It was choked up, the roof having fallen in. Clara apprehended the truth at once. Her father’s zeal to grow rich enough to go to Tobolsk, in order to grow richer still, had prevented his going there at all. In this cave was the fossil treasure he had dishonestly concealed from his companions: and in his eager-

ness to extract his wealth from the mass in which it lay embedded, he had pulled down a weight upon his head which killed him. The body was afterwards found ; but, if it had not been for regard to little Clara's feelings, it would probably have been left thus naturally buried ; for a more appropriate grave could scarcely have been devised than that which he had prepared for himself.

" You shall live with us, Clara, and be our sister," said Sophia to the horror-stricken little girl. " Cyprian can never know how kind you were to me while he was away ; but he shall learn to love you for it."

" She may go back to Poland, if she wishes it," observed Taddeus aside to his mother. " There is now nothing to keep her here ; and the Emperor does not yet crusade against little girls, though he does against their mothers and brothers."

" She had better stay where she is," said Paul, also aside, " and if we all take pains with her, she will turn out a paragon of a wife. Your mother will teach her reasoning and patriotism, and all that, and Emilia will give her all her own accomplishments that it is not too late to begin with. She can never have such an eye and ear, but there is time yet to give her a very clever pair of hands : and then she may settle down as Cyprian and I have done."

" Cyprian and you !" exclaimed Taddeus. But recollecting that there would be no end of quarrels with Paul on this subject if once begun,



he restrained his anger at having Sophia compared with Emilia.

"You shall live with me, my dear, and be my daughter, as you have long called yourself," said Lenore: "and we will comfort one another till we can get back to Poland, if that day should ever come. There is much more comfort for some of us than there was, in the midst of all our misfortunes; and it is a comfort that I do not think we shall lose any more. Some may die, and others may leave us for some different kind of servitude; and it may even happen that none of us may see Warsaw again: but as long as we love one another and are patient, we cannot be quite miserable."

Emilia pointed to the west with a look of joy; and presently the clouds parted slowly, and let out the faint red glow of evening, which spread itself over the subsiding waters. Having hailed the omen, the party separated, some returning to their several homes, and some watching till the long twilight was wholly withdrawn. The spirit of optimism which lives in the hearts of patriots as in its natural home, was now no longer checked by the perpetual presence of a despairing sufferer; and not only this night, but from day to day, did the exiles cheer themselves with the conviction that tyranny cannot endure for ever; that their icy chain would at length be breathed upon, and their country's flag float once more. Such hope is at this moment sanctifying the shores of the Charmed Sea.

## SUMMARY

*Of the Principles illustrated in this Volume.*

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IN exchanging commodities for one another directly, i. e. in the way of barter, much time is lost, and trouble incurred before the respective wants of the exchanging parties can be supplied.

This trouble and waste may be avoided by the adoption of a medium of exchange; that is, a commodity generally agreed upon, which, in order to effect an exchange between two other commodities, is first received in exchange for the one, and then given in exchange for the other.

This commodity is money.

The great requisites in a medium of exchange are, that it should be—

- ... what all sellers are willing to receive;
- ... capable of division into convenient portions;
- ... portable, from including great value in small bulk;
- ... indestructible, and little liable to fluctuations of value.

Gold and silver unite these requisites in an unequalled degree, and have also the desirable quality of beauty. Gold and silver have therefore formed the principal medium of exchange hitherto adopted: usually prepared, by an appointed authority, in the form most suitable for the purposes of exchange, in order to avoid the

inconvenience of ascertaining the value of the medium on every occasion of purchase.

Where the supply of money is left unrestricted, its exchangeable value will be ultimately determined, like that of all other commodities, by the cost of production.

Where the supply is restricted, its exchangeable value depends on the proportion of the demand to the supply.

In the former case, it retains its character of a commodity, serving as a standard of value in preference to other commodities only in virtue of its superior natural requisites to that object.

In the latter case, it ceases to be a commodity, and becomes a mere ticket of transference, or arbitrary sign of value: and then, the natural requisites above described become of comparatively little importance.

The quality by which money passes from hand to hand with little injury enables it to compensate inequalities of supply by the slackened or accelerated speed of its circulation.

The rate of circulation serves as an index of the state of supply; and therefore tends, where no restriction exists, to an adjustment of the supply to the demand.

Where restriction exists, the rate of circulation indicates the degree of derangement introduced among the elements of exchangeable value, but has no permanent influence in its rectification.

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.





